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Money
 Searching for Netanyahu's economic agenda
 It's all in the Money Magazine
TODAY

Religious parties work on joint platform

HERB KEINON

THE National Religious Party, Shas and United Torah Judaism were still meeting near midnight last night, trying to hammer out a draft agreement to take to the Likud as a basis for their participation in the coalition.

Details of the draft were kept tightly under wraps, with officials involved in the negotiations saying that they are concerned that leaks to the press would damage their negotiating stance.

Two members of each party were meeting in four different groups in an attempt to come to the Likud with a single list of demands. The groups were dealing with appointments to various Knesset posts, the religious status quo, education, and housing (including housing beyond the Green Line).

At the same time, the heads of the three parties - Aryeh Deri of Shas, Zevulun Hammer of the NRP, and Meir Porush of UTJ - were meeting in an effort to resolve differences between the parties, primarily over portfolios.

Channel 1 reported last night that at the meeting, it was decided that Porush would be named chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee.

The NRP's Shmaryahu Ben-Tzur said the purpose of the meetings is to coordinate positions so that the three parties can go into the negotiations with the Likud with a united position. This also would facilitate the negotiations.

He said that the meetings would also deal with the distribution of portfolios among the parties.

The NRP has shown interest in the Education, Religious Affairs, and Labor and Social Affairs portfolios, Shas in the Interior and Religious Affairs portfolios, and UTJ in control of the Housing Ministry.

Since both Shas and the NRP are interested in the Religious Affairs portfolio, there is talk of some kind of rotation agreement between the parties.

UTJ MK Avraham Ravitz said that although the Agudat Yisrael faction of his party has ruled out taking on a full ministerial position, Degel Hatorah has not yet reached a decision on the matter. Traditionally, Agudat Yisrael and Degel Hatorah have not taken a ministerial position because of ideological problems with the collective responsibility ministers have for the actions of the whole government.

But, Ravitz said, if Degel does not get a ministry, UTJ will ask for effective control of the Housing Ministry, meaning a deputy ministerial position there, with the portfolio to remain with the prime minister.

The parties also reached a consensus on agreeing to roll back the status quo to what it was prior to the 1992 elections. Since then, numerous businesses have opened on Shabbat, and the Reform Movement has made inroads into religious councils around the country.

NRP MK Yigal Bibi explained the coordination between the three parties, long at loggerheads, by saying, "We learned a lesson from the elections eight years ago, when there was a disgrace as each party came and [just wanted to know] what the other party got, not what the public needs. The lesson was learned, and this time we will go [into the negotiations] united."



Prime Minister Shimon Peres holds the door for prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu, following their meeting yesterday in Jerusalem. (Gideon Markovitz/PPA)

Arafat, Mubarak, Hussein to discuss election results today

PALESTINIAN Authority

Chairman Yasser Arafat will join Jordan's King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Akaba today in one of a series of high-level Arab meetings to map out a joint strategy for continuing the peace process following Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu's election as prime minister.

There is widespread concern in the Arab world that Netanyahu might slow or even completely stop the Middle East peace process.

US President Bill Clinton has sent letters to Arab leaders reaffirming US support for a "comprehensive, just, and lasting peace."

Jordanian Information Minister Marwan Mouasher said today's meeting will "discuss ways to support the Palestinian people and its leadership in negotiations with Israel" and keep the process moving.

"We hope to come up with a specific mechanism to resume negotiations on the Palestinian track," Mouasher told the Associated Press.

Omar Khalil, chief of the PLO mission in Jordan, said Arafat will ask Jordan and Egypt to use their good offices with Israel to "execute accords" reached with Shimon Peres's government and "pursue the path of negotiations for a permanent settlement."

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, Mubarak, and Syrian President Hafez Assad are reportedly going to meet in the Jiddah next week to consider ways to boost Damascus's stand in the peace talks, sources said yesterday.

The Saudi, Syrian, and Egyptian foreign ministers "have agreed on a number of recommendations which include holding a summit," a senior Arab diplomat said. However, there was no official word from any of the three countries on such a meeting.

News of the Jiddah summit came the day after Mubarak and Assad met in Cairo to discuss the same topic, which also was discussed on Sunday in a meeting between Assad and Lebanese President Elias Hrawi.

Following the summit in Cairo, the Syrian and Egyptian foreign ministers flew to Riyadh for consultations with the kingdom about the summit. Their meeting ended yesterday.

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Peled favored to head national security council

Peres, Netanyahu discuss security issues

MAJ.-GEN. (Res.) Yossi Peled is emerging as the leading contender to head a new national security council-style staff apparatus in the Prime Minister's Office, sources say.

The council would coordinate national security affairs among all government branches, including the intelligence services and the Foreign Ministry. Dore Gold, an academic affiliated with Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies and a consultant to prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu, is expected to serve as the prime minister's key foreign policy adviser, according to the sources.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu was briefed by Prime Minister Shimon Peres, in their first meeting since the election. After the briefing he promised to study the issue of IDF redeployment of Hebron.

Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir also briefed Gold on the issue of Hebron and other peace process-related issues. Netanyahu aides have said that new policies would not be formulated until they had been briefed on current developments and had access to classified material.

The creation of a national security council staff would be an innovation in policy-making circles. Even though it is mandated by law, such a staff never emerged due to opposition by the defense minister, who wanted all matters pertaining to national security coordinated solely by his office.

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DAVID MAKOVSKY

However, the inner cabinet, which consists of ministers and top military officials, could be deemed equivalent to the US National Security Council. A national security council would formalize this and provide it with a permanent staff.

Due to the new law for the direct election of the prime minister, Netanyahu is believed to have the power to create a council to coordinate the national security bureaucracy.

There were reports yesterday that an authority designated to privatize state-run companies would also be directly subordinate to the Prime Minister's Office. (See story, Page 8)

The selection of Peled is apparently designed to ensure that someone on the staff knows the military bureaucracy and has its full cooperation. Peled participated in yesterday's meetings between Netanyahu and Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and Mossad chief Danny Yatom.

The meetings were held in Netanyahu's Knesset office and lasted 45 minutes each. Netanyahu expressed confidence in both men and said he looked forward to working with them.

In the past, inter-agency cooperation on the staff level has been poor, since the Defense Ministry often kept out the Foreign Ministry and others. This has improved since the secret Oslo talks, which were headed by top

Foreign Ministry officials.

In contrast to the animosity of the campaign, Peres and Netanyahu smiled and shook hands warmly after their one-hour meeting, and Netanyahu referred to Peres as "Shimon" and thanked him again for his contribution to the nation.

Yet, both denied that they discussed the formation of a national unity government.

Netanyahu has sought to reassure Arabs and the US since his election that he will proceed with the peace process. He said yesterday he would try to base his policies on "a broad consensus that exists in the public in general and, on the issues most critical to Israel, apparently also between me and Mr. Peres."

The two said they discussed security issues, apparently including Hebron and the fight against terrorism.

Peres promised to do all in his power to assure a smooth transition. "I can promise that from my side there will be a very honorable, responsible, and orderly transition," he said.

US Ambassador Martin Indyk, after meeting with Netanyahu, said: "We are committed to working very closely with him" to advance the peace negotiations.

"The purpose of that meeting," he added, "was to plan for his upcoming visit to Washington. The president is keen to meet with him, and we've agreed that he'll come as soon as possible after he's formed the government."

He said, however, that Hizballah had not laid down its arms and still intends striking at Israel.

He also noted Hizballah is receiving help within the security zone as seen by the Marjayoun incident last week in which four IDF soldiers were killed. He said this cooperation is hindering operative abilities and intelligence. Hizballah is testing the limits of the understanding reached after the Grapes of Wrath operation, he said.

Shahak said that operation had cost the IDF NIS 200 million. The Finance Ministry is refusing to cover this cost and it will have to come from the IDF's own budget.

Discussing the Rafiah Airport in Gaza, the chief of staff said no agreement had been reached with the Palestinians on how to carry out security at the site, but it is agreed that Israel will remain in control as far as security is concerned.

"I remind you that the security control at all crossings is in our hands and if there should be even one not under our security supervision, there would be no point in having [control at] any of the others as the gap would be exploited."

On a different note, Shahak discussed the March IDF enlistment and said fewer soldiers had requested the armored and artillery corps but the engineering corp had gained popularity.

He also said there had been a rise in the number of soldiers refusing to leave the induction base because they were dissatisfied with the units to which they had been assigned.

Lipkin-Shahak: IDF has no say in defense portfolio appointment

LIAT COLLINS

IDF Chief of Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak refused to talk to reporters after addressing yesterday's Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, but dismissed reports that the IDF top brass is trying to dissuade Binyamin Netanyahu from appointing Yitzhak Mordechai as defense minister. Shahak said the IDF does not interfere with political appointments.

At the meeting, he told the MKs that the IDF is prepared to redeploy in Hebron as soon as it receives instructions to do so.

He said the overall security in Hebron would remain in IDF hands; the IDF would remain the only military force in the city and would be deployed throughout it.

According to an official briefing, Shahak said Hebron residents are tense in the face of the redeployment.

Shahak said there were no specific threats of terror attacks. An intelligence branch colonel told the committee that prior to the elections "public pressure and the prevailing impression were greater than the warnings of the attacks themselves."

Regarding Lebanon, Shahak said there were signs of growing differences between Hizballah and the Lebanese government for the first time in years.

He said the upcoming elections in Lebanon might be one of the reasons the Lebanese government is showing greater interest in southern Lebanon and is trying to increase its rule there while decreasing Hizballah influence.

He added that should the Lebanese government succeed, "Israel would find itself in a more comfortable position there."

He said, however, that Hizballah had not laid down its arms and still intends striking at Israel.

He also noted Hizballah is receiving help within the security zone as seen by the Marjayoun incident last week in which four IDF soldiers were killed. He said this cooperation is hindering operative abilities and intelligence. Hizballah is testing the limits of the understanding reached after the Grapes of Wrath operation, he said.

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Barak to contend for Labor leadership

MICHAL YUDELMAN

FOREIGN Minister Ehud Barak reportedly intends to contend for the Labor Party's leadership.

Labor sources said yesterday that Barak has a good chance of winning the party's leadership, since many feel that Haim Ramon, who was considered the favored candidate until the elections, led the party to defeat in his role as campaign information director.

At this stage, Barak has decided to officially announce his plans only after Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who is also Labor's chairman, decides on his future. But he is determined to run for the party leadership even if Peres "decides not to decide," sources close to him said.

Barak reportedly will not make any public statements regarding the election defeat and is consulting with Peres and other party leaders on issues relating to Labor's future. He has also had the party's constitution sent to his office, in order to study the regulations for a leadership contest.

He has made it clear that he is through exchanging accusations with Ramon about who is to blame for the defeat, and is now looking toward the future.

After the elections, Barak, who directed Peres's personal campaign, accused Ramon of devising the disastrous campaign strategy which cost Labor the election.

Barak has never lost a fight before these elections, one source close to him said, and is taking it very hard.

Labor sources said they believe that Ramon will lose if he runs for the party's leadership.

French minister launches probe into teacher's question on gassing Jews

PARIS (Reuters) - France's education minister launched disciplinary proceedings yesterday against a chemistry teacher who asked her class to calculate how much carbon monoxide was required to kill Jews in the Holocaust.

"Hitler killed Jews by locking them in lorries with the exhaust fumes fed inside," the question reads. "With a truck volume of 50 cubic meters, what volume of carbon monoxide does it take to reach the fatal ratio of five per 1,000?"

If people took on average 20 minutes to die, what volume of carbon monoxide did the engine produce per hour?"

Education Minister Francois Bayrou told French radio: "I have launched proceedings and that will no doubt be accompanied by a suspension while we wait for the disciplinary board to intervene. There are facts which we cannot speak about in a banal way, which belong to the memory of humanity and which

must be respected as sacred. It is intolerable to raise them in this way," he added.

The teacher, reportedly Jewish, said he aimed to denounce the Holocaust and revisionist theories about it.

In a letter to France's education minister, the International League Against Racism and Antisemitism denounced the assignment as "scandalous."

Anschwitz building halted again, Page 3

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Initial coalition talks end; real bargaining begins

THE first round of coalition negotiations was completed yesterday, and the actual bargaining is now expected to begin in earnest.

With portfolio allocation in the offing, tension in all potential coalition partners is rising, especially within the Likud where no one has a clue about Binyamin Netanyahu's intentions. Further in the background is the less likely but still possible option of national unity.

By last night, all the parties considered for coalition membership had been received by the Likud negotiators and had aired their initial demands. Now it is the Likud's turn to reply, thereby shifting the coalition formation process into a higher gear.

The last to make their demands were Yisrael Ba'aliya and the Third Way. Both announced that they had reached full agreement with the Likud on the issues which would feature in the coalition guidelines. However, both had tough demands as far as portfolios are concerned.

Yisrael Ba'aliya's Michael Nudelman, Yuli Edelstein, and Yehonatan Scharon met with Likud negotiators, headed by MK Tzahi Hanegbi. They agreed with most of the Likud guidelines, and said their demands for maintenance of the religious status quo, for finding solutions non-Jewish family members facing halachic problems, and creating favorable conditions for the absorption of a million more immigrants had been satisfied.

But they demanded the Housing portfolio (also sought by other parties) and one of the following: Education, Interior, Trade and Industry, or Labor and Social Welfare. In addition they want

SARAH HONIG

two deputy ministers. Hanegbi told them he would pass on the requests.

The Third Way's Avigdor Kahalani conferred with Netanyahu and emerged saying that the Likud's guidelines fit well with his party's principles, and that it is closer than ever to entering the coalition. Kahalani asked for two portfolios, which he wants fused into one - Transport and Tourism.

Netanyahu will now have to begin making portfolio decisions. Likud insiders say they have never known a situation in which nothing leaks regarding ministerial appointments. The chief reason is that Netanyahu personally holds all the cards and isn't showing them to anyone. His intentions are a mystery even to some of those closest to him.

This hasn't, however, stopped the political rumor mill. While a number of alternative versions of what can be expected for the most lucrative portfolios are circulating, most of the money in the Likud is on David Levy for Foreign Minister and Yitzhak Mordechai for Defense.

However, Ariel Sharon is not expected to get the Treasury and will probably be named trade and industry minister, with increased authority. This is seen as the explanation for why Sharon is reported to be peeved. His relations with Netanyahu are said to be on the verge of a rift. Finance, according to the more popular Likud scenario, will go to Dan Meridor.

Meridor, meanwhile has begun - along with MK Michael Eitan -

the arduous task of drafting the coalition guidelines. MK Elihu Ben-Elissar is said to be Netanyahu's candidate for Knesset Speaker. Likud and Labor MKs have been in touch, sounding each other out on a unity government. But this is being done without the Labor Party's authority, and no one in the Likud can really speak for Netanyahu. The big question mark is whether Netanyahu has in any way sanctioned the feelers.

The consensus is that the likelihood of a unity government is low, since Netanyahu can put together a comfortable coalition. But the threat of inviting Labor into his government will be helpful in lowering the partners' demands.

Likud pundits now suggest that clues to what Netanyahu has in mind will be found when he announces who his appointees to the top portfolios will be. These are the portfolios which would have to be shared with Labor, should it be invited into the coalition. Thus, so long as no formal announcement has been made about Defense, Foreign Affairs, and Finance, the unity option remains alive, at least in theory.

Another clue is how long it takes Netanyahu to form his coalition. If he does not present his new government by June 17 - when the new Knesset convenes for the first time - or shortly thereafter, the chances for national unity improve.

Likud negotiators, meanwhile, again made it clear to all likely coalition partners that there will be no amendment of the new basic law which sets an 18 minister and six deputy minister limit.

Netanyahu thanks Degel Hatorah for haredi support

PRIME MINISTER-elect Binyamin Netanyahu went to Mea She'arim yesterday for a meeting with Rabbi Shalom Yosef Elyashiv, one of the rabbinic leaders of Degel Hatorah, to thank him for the massive support of the haredi community.

United Torah Judaism MK Avraham Ravitz said that Netanyahu told Elyashiv that he believes the declared support of the haredim a few days before the election created a degree of momentum in the campaign that helped him gain other votes as well.

Ravitz said that Netanyahu made a general pledge to preserve

HERB KEINON

the Jewish nature of the state and strengthen Jewish education, but did not go into detail.

He denied reports that Elyashiv had initiated the meeting to push the candidacy of Ariel Sharon for finance minister.

Nevertheless, Ravitz did confirm that the religious parties, particularly UTJ, are lobbying for Sharon.

"There is a feeling that he understands our needs, that he is somebody we can work with," Ravitz said. "We don't understand why he shouldn't be finance min-

ister." He was instrumental in putting together the agreement between Likud, Gesher, and Tsomet.

Ravitz said that over the years a chemistry has developed between haredi leaders and Sharon, due to his "deep respect and appreciation" for religion and for the role of religion in Jewish survival.

Sharon was the Likud's link with the haredi community in the last elections, and Ravitz said that although it was clear that Degel Hatorah's rabbis would support Netanyahu, Sharon was instrumental in swaying some of the haredic rabbis affiliated with Agudat Yisrael.

Court: Shetreet can't appoint 15 to Druse council

THE High Court of Justice yesterday issued a temporary restraining order barring Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet from appointing anyone to the Druse Religious Council until the court issues its ruling on a petition against the appointment procedure.

The request for the order was filed by attorney Michael Corinaldi, who represents Sheik Hamzat Halabi, of Daliat al-Carmel. On May 28, the day before the elections, Shetreet appointed 15 members to the 60-member council, in accordance with the procedures that several Druse are petitioning against.

The order was issued by Justices Eliezer Goldberg, Mishael Cheshin, and Yitzhak Zamir.

"It seems appropriate that

Shetreet would wait until after the elections to appoint new council members to enable the new religious affairs minister to study the issue," Cheshin said.

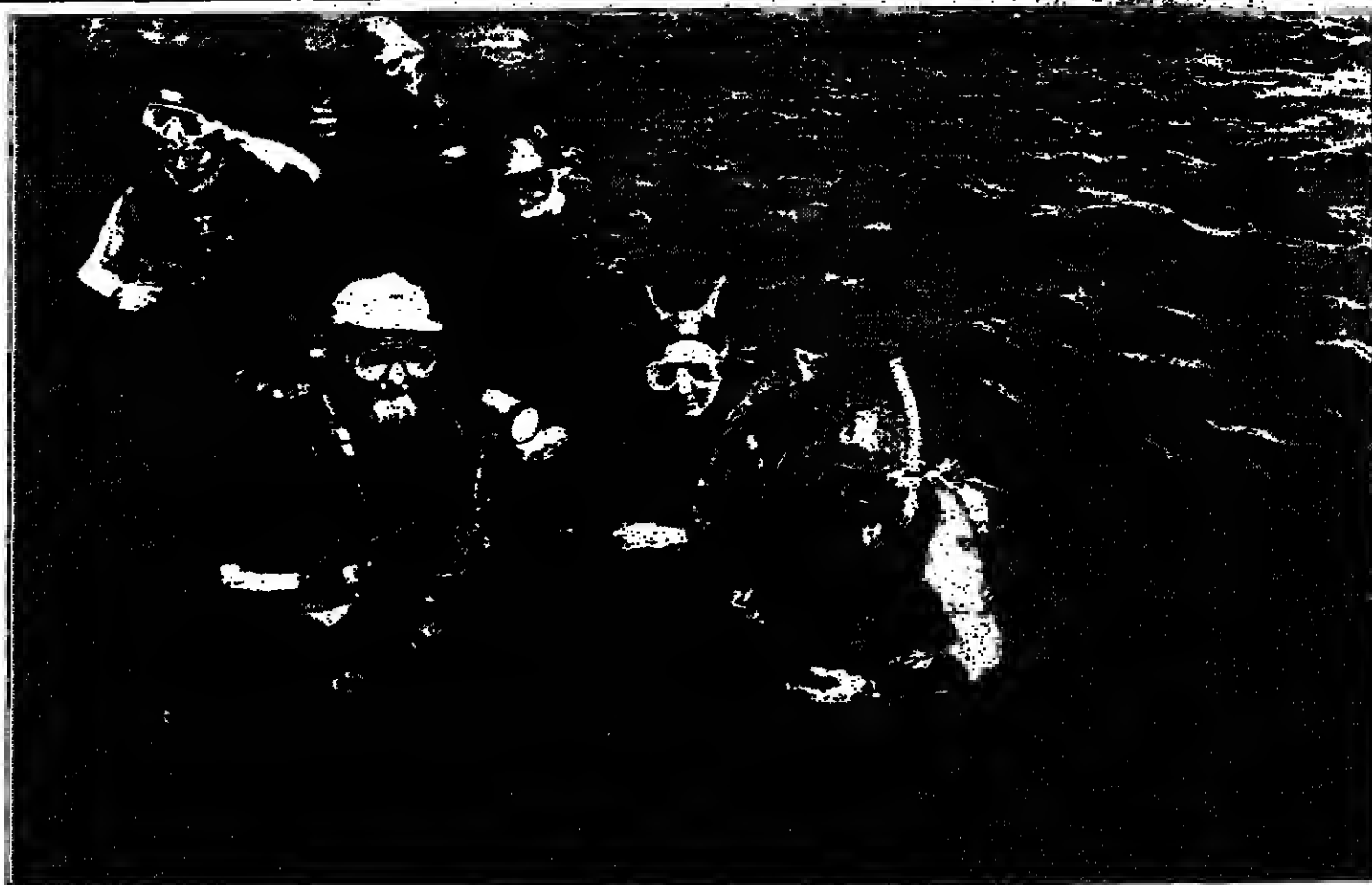
Meanwhile, the Attorney-General's Office ordered the Education Ministry not to appoint a senior deputy director-general until the formation of the new government. The order came at the request of the jurists' group B'tzedek.

In early May, Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair had instructed all cabinet ministers not to appoint new directors of government-owned companies or new officers to senior ministry posts until a new government is in place.

(iim)
Petition against new Mifal Hapayis head, Page 8

Interfaith award

Archbishop Andrea di Montezemolo is to receive the International Council of Christians and Jews' Interfaith Gold Medallion today from ICCJ Chairman Sir Sigmund Sternberg. *Jerusalem Post Staff*



Members of the JNF of America's first-ever scuba diving mission to Israel and Egypt participate in opening day events at Caesarea. Pictured (from left to right, front) are Judge Howard Stalter, Prof. Maureen Gordon, and biologist John Goretz. (Joe Malcolm)

Labor at odds over possibility of unity government

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

THE idea of joining a national unity government is causing controversy in the Labor Party, even though prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu has not even proposed it.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres yesterday reiterated that Labor should not be the one to suggest a unity government, intimating that if an offer comes from Netanyahu, Labor would consider it.

Labor sources said Netanyahu has not yet revealed whether he intends to form a unity government. They pointed out that if Netanyahu gives the senior cabinet portfolios - Defense, Foreign Affairs, and Finance - to Likud members, that would signal that he is not interested in having

Labor as a partner. Minister Yossi Beilin, who last week opposed the idea, yesterday came out in favor of joining a unity government.

"Labor can serve in the opposition as the watchdog of the peace process, but if a respectable offer comes from Netanyahu, I think it would be a mistake to reject it," he said. "There is a very detailed timetable for the stages of the Oslo agreement and if we're in the government, we can see to it that the timetable is adhered to."

Beilin said Labor has three goals: continuing the peace process; strengthening its ties

with those sectors of the public which drifted away from the party, such as the religious and new immigrants; and rehabilitating the party.

Ministers Ehud Barak, Avraham Shohat, and Binyamin Ben-Eliezer reportedly also support joining a unity government.

However, Tourism Minister Uzi Baram came out strongly against the possibility. "I'm a little embarrassed and ashamed that people in my party are raising the issue even before the Likud has suggested it, and before the ink has dried on Labor's main election slogan, that

Netanyahu is not suitable," Baram said.

"The proper thing to do is to let Netanyahu form a government and see how he functions and what his policy will be. We don't yet know who Netanyahu is and where he is heading."

Baram said that although the difference in the number of votes each candidate received was small, one candidate won and the other must be in the opposition.

"We received one percent less votes than Netanyahu and should be proud of the public which supported us," he said. "Today, we must organize the opposition and not waste energy in directions which are wrong and undesirable."

Health Ministry warns of lettuce containing rat poison

JUDY SIEGEL

RAT poison was found in lettuce sold in the Jerusalem area and, in a separate incident, was ingested by a two-year-old boy who collected it from the floor of a Ramat Gan store. A lettuce grower from Moshav Zohar in the south has admitted to illegally using the poison.

The Health Ministry yesterday warned the public not to eat lettuce strewn with green granules. The ministry received complaints about granules in lettuce from a Jerusalem woman and the Biblical Zoo, which obtained lettuce for the animals. Neither the woman nor the animals ate the poison. Lab tests disclosed the granules were rat poison. Anyone who finds lettuce that is at all suspicious should bring it to the nearest district health office.

The ministry said it had received

no reports in recent days of anyone poisoned by such a chemical. Ministry inspectors have been collecting the affected lettuce from shelves for destruction.

Meanwhile, the Israel Consumer Council said yesterday that it had received a complaint from a family whose toddler swallowed rat poison spread about on the floor of the Home Center store in Ramat Gan. Council chairman Zvi Ramot demanded that the store prevent a recurrence.

The council said it had turned to the Health and Environment Ministries about the incident, but each said it was not responsible for supervising such a store. The family claimed it hadn't yet received an apology from Home Center even though it demanded action to prevent a recurrence.

'Old friends' Peres and Weizman have breakfast

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

OUTGOING Prime Minister Shimon Peres met yesterday morning at Beit Hanassi with President Ezer Weizman.

After a 45-minute tete-a-tete over breakfast, Weizman accompanied Peres out to meet reporters and, in answer to a question, said the two had not discussed a national unity government.

"We've been friends for 45 years and we have plenty to talk about apart from the state of things," Weizman said. "Anyway, we're all in a state of transition from one situation to another here, and that gave us a lot to discuss."

Asked about the possibility of a national unity government, Peres said: "The one who is forming a government is Binyamin Netanyahu. If he has any suggestions in the matter, he will make them. I don't think our side should propose anything, except good wishes, and to transfer the administration in an orderly and responsible manner."

Commenting about reports that he might be fielded as United Nations secretary-general, Peres said he too had heard "that gossip, but so far nobody has approached me on the issue and I didn't broach it with anyone either."

Reservist sneaked into Defense Ministry

ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

A RESERVE major sneaked passed three guards at the Ministry of Defense late Monday night, making his way past the office of Defense Minister Shimon Peres before he was stopped on the seventh floor.

Peres was not in the building at the time, so the guards were

not the professionally-trained General Security Service agents, an official said.

The man was said to be mentally unstable and did not say why he was there.

Three Defense Ministry guards were suspended for negligence, the official said.

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4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Reception and Information Fair
5:30 p.m. - Award Ceremony

Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Chairman of the ICCJ Executive, will present the ICCJ INTERFAITH GOLD MEDALLION to H.E. Archbishop Andrea di Montezemolo, Apostolic Nuncio in Israel, who will respond. For more information, contact Dr. Ron Kronish, ICCI, POB 7855, Jerusalem 91078.

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Guest of Honor Mrs. Miriam Ben-Porat, State Comptroller

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אברהם בן-פורט



Chechen rebel chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov (center), surrounded by bodyguards, arrives for talks with the Russian delegation in Nazran yesterday.

Russia changes tone on NATO growth

RUSSIA softened its strident opposition to NATO's expansion plans yesterday, hinting at a possible compromise and signalling its desire to start work towards a new pact between the former enemies.

Just two weeks before Russian presidential elections, Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov told his NATO counterparts Russia could live with enlargement under certain conditions.

"Primakov said Russia had no basic objection to other countries' desires to become NATO members, but Russia decisively opposed moving NATO military structures up to Russia's borders," German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told reporters.

Primakov was less direct, however, telling reporters after a session with his counterparts from the 16 NATO nations. "Our discussions were very constructive and useful. Russia seeks to develop its relations with NATO."

Primakov previously has said Russia considered NATO's plans to absorb former Soviet allies in Eastern Europe into the western defense alliance a threat.

"I was very pleasantly surprised by the very positive tone and the reasonable things he said," Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo said after yesterday's meetings, held

on the second day of NATO foreign ministers' bi-annual gathering.

Other NATO officials described Primakov as being more flexible in tone but not in position.

Kinkel and other NATO officials, including the French and Americans, declined to characterize Primakov's comments as a softening of position but said Russia's tone was more cooperative.

Kinkel said Primakov still feels such steps as establishing new bases close to Russia are unacceptable.

"We would have difficulties when the military infrastructure is extended to our borders," Kinkel quoted Primakov as saying, adding that Primakov said Russia was willing to discuss compromises.

NATO ministers have consistently ruled out any Russian veto and again made this clear to Primakov yesterday.

Several officials said it appeared Russia had accepted it could not stop the enlargement. "They can live with it," one NATO official, speaking on background, paraphrased Primakov as saying.

"The Russians are step-by-step adapting their position to the fact that NATO will enlarge," said

Slovenia's acting foreign minister, Zoran Thaler.

Eastern European countries once allied with the Soviet Union under the Warsaw Pact are now lining up to join NATO, but no timetable was discussed in talks yesterday between NATO and the affiliated members of its North Atlantic Cooperation Council.

"The desire of our eastern neighbors to accede to the alliance is legitimate," German Chancellor Helmut Kohl said at the meeting.

"I welcome with satisfaction the apparent evolution of the Russian position," Polish Foreign Minister Dariusz Rosati told Associated Press Television. Poland is a prime

NATO candidate. "They begin to understand they don't have a reason to be afraid of an enlarged NATO."

NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana called yesterday's talks "very constructive, very positive and very cordial."

Primakov expressed Russia's interest in participating in NATO efforts to build tactical and missile defense systems and suggested stepping up the pace of NATO-Russian meetings, the alliance official said.

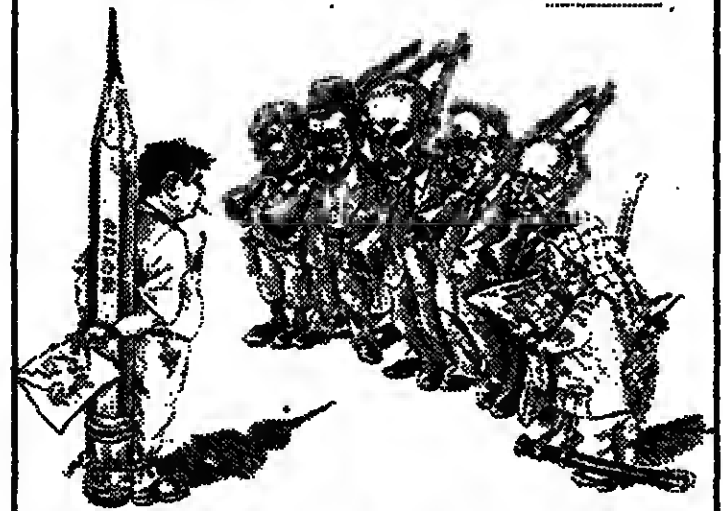
NATO officials denied they were deliberately avoiding the touchy issue of expansion, especially as Russia's June 16 presidential vote nears.

Ardent nationalists have mounted a strong challenge to pro-Western Boris Yeltsin's re-election bid.

News agencies

BERLIN

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Yeltsin rival looks for new allies

NOVOSIBIRSK (Reuters) - Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov held out an olive branch yesterday to some rivals in Russia's presidential race, hoping to unite them with him against Kremlin chief Boris Yeltsin.

Interfax news agency quoted Zyuganov as saying in the Siberian city of Novosibirsk that he was ready to offer "posts in the government to all those who represent 'the third force'."

This usually means three other candidates - liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky, retired general Alexander Lebed and eye surgeon Svyatoslav Fyodorov.

"We are holding intensive talks," Zyuganov said.

Itar-Tass news agency quoted Zyuganov as saying he would offer "third force" posts in his government if he wins the June 16 election. "You may consider my statement as an official invitation," Tass quoted him as saying.

Yavlinsky, Lebed and Fyodorov have tried and failed to unite to form a "third force" challenge to Yeltsin and Zyuganov.

Zyuganov is challenging Yeltsin's re-election hopes by playing on hardships suffered by millions of Russians in a chaotic transition towards a market economy.

Although he led Yeltsin early in the campaign, opinion polls now say the Kremlin leader, who is heavily backed by television channels and liberal newspapers, has overtaken him.

One weekend poll showed 35 percent of those questioned would vote for Yeltsin, compared to 24 percent for Zyuganov.

Zyuganov's camp says the polls are wrong and that their own surveys show that their candidate will win. But the communist leader is clearly searching for ways to revitalize his campaign.

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Japan shoots down US bomber by mistake

HONOLULU (AP) - A Japanese destroyer accidentally shot down a US attack bomber during joint military exercises off Hawaii. Its two American crew members ejected safely and were rescued in good condition.

Japan quickly apologized for the accident, which happened at 0515 GMT yesterday as the US Navy's A-6E Intruder was towing a gunnery target 2,500 km west of Hawaii. For as-yet unknown reasons, the Japanese vessel *Yuugiri* fired at the target but hit the plane, and it crashed in the Pacific.

The pilot, Lt. Cmdr. William Royster of Kansas City, Missouri, and bombardier-navigator, Lt. Keith Douglas of Birmingham, Alabama, were rescued within minutes by the *Yuugiri* and were able to walk. The men were taken by helicopter to their home ship, the aircraft carrier USS Independence, for treatment.

Royster had facial lacerations and was listed in good condition after surgery on the ship; Douglas was treated for superficial abra-

sions and returned to duty, said Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Alderson, a spokesman for the Pacific Fleet. The Independence was expected to arrive back in Honolulu by Saturday.

"It's a unique and unfortunate accident, but it's not a tragedy because we recovered both crew members in good condition," Capt. Steve Clawson, spokesman for the US Pacific Fleet.

The Japanese Defense Agency apologized to the US military and decided to halt shooting practice using live ammunition, said spokesman Tomohide Matsumura.

The 137-meter *Yuugiri*, which carries a crew of about 200, was using a 22 mm weapons system capable of firing bursts of 3,000 rounds per minute, said Tetsuke Kobayashi, a Japanese navy official.

Kobayashi said mechanical trouble in the weapons system may have caused the accident. "Apparently the missiles were launched when they weren't

meant to be," he said.

Cmdr. Keith Arterburn of US Pacific Fleet said he couldn't confirm whether a mechanical malfunction was at fault.

Pentagon spokesman George Lennon in Washington said the Japanese reported the downing immediately back through the various chains of command.

Japan Defense Agency official Tsutomu Sugiyama said eight Japanese escort vessels, a supply ship, flying corps, eight submarine chasers and one submarine were participating in the month-long exercises, which began May 22.

The annual maneuvers - called RIMPAC, for Rim of the Pacific - were launched by Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada in 1971. New Zealand later withdrew from the group; Japan has been participating since 1980.

This is the first such accident involving Japan since it began participating in the RIMPAC exercises, Kobayashi said.

Ariane 5 blown up after take-off

KOUROU, French Guiana (AP) - Technicians deliberately blew up Europe's newest unmanned satellite-launching rocket yesterday seconds after take-off as a safety precaution, launch officials said.

They said the decision to blow up the rocket by remote control was made when it appeared the rocket was veering off its trajectory, raising the risk it might crash into Earth.

French TV showed footage of the burning wreckage of the Ariane 5 rocket falling back to Earth. The European Space Agency had touted its launch at 2:33 p.m. Paris time as a new age in commercial satellite technology.

The rocket was on its first voyage after 10 years and \$7 billion of development by some of Europe's top scientists.

Michel Migliot, director of the Guiana Space Center, said the rocket exploded at a height of 4,000 meters.

"The accident took place over a totally evacuated zone and no

ground personnel nor members of the public were visibly affected," he said.

The aftermath looked eerily like the 1986 explosion of the US space shuttle Challenger. As it blew apart shortly after launch, the Ariane 5 spewed fragments of burning wreckage and left a similar long plume of smoke in the sky.

The disaster deals a huge setback to Arianespace, the space agency's commercial satellite launching arm, which had counted on the new rocket to lock up a market it already dominates.

"It's a disappointment, but we have to bounce back. Life goes on," said Arianespace President Claude Bigot.

The Ariane 5, the successor to the long-successful Ariane 4, blasted off from the space agency's sprawling facility in French Guiana on the northeastern shoulder of South America.

It was carrying four science satellites but no people. The satel-

lites were destroyed along with the rocket, but their value wasn't immediately known.

The launch was one hour later than scheduled because of cloudy weather conditions that would have prevented scientists from obtaining clear film footage of all the stages of the maiden voyage.

Backed by 53 European shareholders, mostly governments and state-run companies, French-led Arianespace now dominates roughly 60 percent of the multi-billion-dollar launch market, its rockets raking in \$1 billion a year.

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Quiet mourning marks Tiananmen anniversary

BEIJING (AP) - Police dragged at least one person away from Tiananmen Square yesterday as mourners quietly marked the seventh anniversary of the army massacre of democracy protesters.

Yesterday the square was filled with the usual crowd of Chinese and foreign tourists. A heavy contingent of plainclothes police was there too.

The brutality of the military attack in 1989 and a heavy police presence on Beijing's streets during anniversaries have effectively dissuaded most Chinese from public commemorations.

But one young woman braved the certainty of arrest to carry a large bouquet of flowers to the obelisk Memorial to the People's Heroes at the heart of the square.

The woman carried the flowers almost on to the white marble steps of the memorial before uniformed police dragged her from the square and across the street.

The woman resisted as police seized the flowers, forced her into a motorcycle sidecar, and drove

away with her legs still in the air, leaving behind a pile of yellow chrysanthemum petals.

Wary of such protests, police on the square checked identity cards and questioned Chinese deemed suspect. Earlier in the morning, one young man was stopped by police but was then let go.

Public acts of protest or mourning are prohibited in China, particularly in Tiananmen Square. A sign on the memorial's platform - put up after the 1989 crackdown - warns against touching it or laying any flowers or printed matter without advance permission from the government. Violators, it says, will be sternly punished.

Seven years ago, the Tiananmen demonstrations began with university students laying bouquets and wreaths near the marble stele following the April 15 death of former Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang, an outspoken reformer ousted in 1987 for not halting student protests.

The students first demanded rehabilitation of Hu's reputation.

As the protests grew, their demands expanded to include the ouster of corrupt leaders and democratic reforms. Near the memorial, they erected their own styrofoam "Goddess of Democracy."

When the numbers in the square topped 1 million, party elders and hard-liners feared their legitimacy would be forever diminished and decided to strike back.

Supported by tanks and other armored vehicles, soldiers began moving into Beijing on June 3, and in the early hours began firing into astonished crowds that tried to block their way.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, are believed to have been killed on the streets. The party insists no one died in Tiananmen Square.

More police were stationed in Beijing's university district, where the 1989 demonstrations began. Police detained a reporter and cameraman from the ABC television network for two hours after they shot footage of Beijing University from a car.

UN conference aims to deal with urban problems

ISTANBUL (AP) - Across town from Istanbul's teeming slums, delegates opened a UN conference on urban problems by promising bold steps to curb the misery caused by migration to the world's big cities.

Crime, squalor, homelessness and crumbling roads and bridges were among the issues raised at the Conference on Human Settlements, held some 8 km from Istanbul's slums in a plush new conference center.

Advocates for the poor were not impressed by the promises.

"It's just words," said Brazilian slum activist Jamie Silva. "I want to believe the UN will make a difference, but the problems are too big. Their speeches are just spit in the wind."

The urgency was amplified by UN predictions cited by the speakers: More than half the

world's population will be city dwellers by the end of the century. By 2025, the number could rise to almost two-thirds, most of them in developing nations, including the enormous megapolises of Asia and Latin America.

"We have little time to act," said Fabio Giraldo, Colombian vice minister of development.

The World Bank proposed tripling investment in urban areas to \$15 billion during the next five years. Others spoke of rehabilitating shantytowns and connecting them to water and sewage lines, but there were few specifics.

"The crises of urban development are crises of all states, rich and poor," said the UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his opening speech.

"There can be no isolation. In a rapidly globalizing world, we

all have a stake in the management of growth and development."

At a time of quick, easy commerce and communication, there is little nations can do to protect themselves from urban poverty problems, Boutros-Ghali said.

Poor immigrants stream toward richer nations or swell cities in their homelands.

Unrest in one country can shake an economy halfway around the world, Boutros-Ghali added.

Despite appeals for cooperation, disagreement over the direction of the conference had already surfaced by the end of day one.

Delegates from Asia and South America complained about Western reluctance to aid urban projects because of fears of corruption and mismanagement.

The Vatican and others are pushing for more attention to families.

The US opposes any statement in conference documents insisting that people have a right to demand housing from governments. Its delegation proposed a passage saying governments have "some form of responsibility in the shelter sector."

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PA leaders hope Netanyahu will honor Oslo

PALESTINIAN officials still have a variety of opinions about relations with the new Israeli government but those interviewed all agreed Hebron will be the first test of the Binyamin Netanyahu version of the peace process.

Many PA officials told *The Jerusalem Post* they believe Prime Minister-elect Netanyahu to be a pragmatic man who will continue the peace path.

"Now he is a prime minister who must represent all Israelis and who will also be subject to international pressures," said one Palestinian negotiator. "It is better to deal with a strong government which represents the majority of the Israeli people - as long as it is committed to honor the agreements and the peace process," he added.

He said the PA and the outgoing

government had agreed redeployment from Hebron would take place after the elections and future relations between the PA and the Netanyahu government will depend very much on whether the latter keeps that commitment.

Hebron, however, is not the only issue left over from the interim agreement. Free passage between Palestinian areas, bypass roads and land appropriations remain unresolved issues, the PA negotiator said.

Further redeployment is slated to begin six months after the completion of the first phase of the agreement.

Under the Oslo accords, Israel is to hand over security responsibilities in Area B and in most unpopulated parts of Area C in three phases over a period of two years. At the end of this, more than two-thirds of the territories would be

under Palestinian control. Settlements and negotiated military installations would remain in Israeli hands.

The official said the system of joint security cooperation is part of the Oslo agreements and will remain in place, but its success depends on good relations and trust between the officers of both sides. He said it will be important for the new government to maintain existing relations and build on them as the former government had done.

AHMED Qreia, the speaker of the elected Palestinian council said it is far too early to judge the new government from the Palestinian perspective.

"We have signed an agreement with the State of Israel and must deal with its elected government," he said. "We hope that the govern-

BACKGROUND LAMIA LAHOUD

ment will honor Israel's commitment to peace and the Oslo accords."

A Fatah member of the Palestinian council said he believes Netanyahu can unite the majority of Israelis behind him and saw a good sign in the swift contact a Netanyahu aide made with the PA's chief negotiator Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) to ensure the Palestinian negotiations will continue.

The council member, who asked not to be identified, also agreed Hebron is the first crucial issue. He said if the new government refused to redeploy, the situation in the territories could deteriorate, endangering the whole peace process.

He also said the PA must develop a strategy for the new realities and that the PA had been overconfident that Shimon Peres would win and had no contingency plan for the new situation.

Marwan Barghout, the secretary of Fatah's high committee, said he finds it difficult to understand how Netanyahu can continue the peace process if surrounded by such hardline opponents of Oslo as Ariel Sharon and Rafael Eitan. However, "If the new government honors the Oslo accord, the PA will do all that's necessary to control Islamic fundamentalists and others who want to attack Israelis, but if the government refuses to implement the agreements, I can't see how Yasser Arafat will have enough popular support to act against them," Barghout said.

"It will not be difficult for us to unite all PLO factions to deal with any threats posed to the peace process by the new government," he added.

THE Fatah executive committee met on Sunday to discuss the change of government. Committee member Ahmed Edik said Fatah fears Netanyahu will not leave Hebron, will extend settlements and will refuse to discuss Jerusalem.

If necessary, Fatah will prepare a "struggle program" starting with demonstrations and pressure groups on the issue of Hebron, he said.

He said Fatah has urged Arafat to concentrate on the West Bank rather than Gaza, and to set up a second headquarters there. "We demand that Arafat spends more time in the West Bank, since [that is where] any struggle with the

new government will be," he said. In an official statement after the meeting, the Fatah committee called on Arab states to close their doors to Netanyahu and his government if they fail to honor the autonomy agreements. But the committee did vote to foster good relations with all pro-peace factions in the Knesset and with the Israeli Arab parties so they could lobby jointly for the peace process, Barghout said.

Hebron's Mayor Mustafa Natshe said the town's Palestinians would ask Arafat to halt all peace and final-status talks with Israel if the redeployment did not take place. "We feel the Israelis are playing with us. Peres promised redeployment after the elections, now he wants to leave it for a new government whose leader has been saying it will not redeploy."

Qatar agrees to mediation with Bahrain

QATAR has agreed to withdraw a petition at the international court over a territorial dispute with Bahrain, but only if Saudi mediation can achieve a breakthrough.

"When the Saudi mediation finds a satisfactory solution to the dispute for both parties we will withdraw the case," Qatar's foreign minister said this week.

"Our door is still open for reaching a solution," the official Saudi Press Agency quoted Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim Al Thani, the Qatari minister, as saying.

Bahrain called on Qatar to withdraw its case at the international court and solve the dispute through direct talks or Saudi mediation.

Both parties had in the past sought Saudi mediation, but Qatar unilaterally took the case to the International Court of Justice five years ago.

Bahrain, on its part, has rejected the court's jurisdiction and boycotted its sessions.

The Bahrain-Qatar dispute is over a chain of islands and shoals, territorial water boundaries and the Zubara land strip in Qatar, where Bahrain's ruling family lived 200 years ago.

The conflict flared in 1986, when Qatari helicopters seized 29 workers of a Dutch firm sent by Bahrain to the Fasht al-Dibal reef to build a Bahraini coast guard station there.

Bahrain's emir meanwhile announced he is expanding the size and power of an appointed consultative council, a move officials say is aimed at countering the political turbulence that has raged 18 months ago.

"It is now propitious and convenient ... to develop the Majlis al-Shura council," Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa was quoted as saying by the Gulf News Agency.

"The members of the council will be banded the new task of studying all that pertains to the daily life of the people," he said during the closing session of the current council, known in Arabic as the Majlis al-Shura. (AP)



Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hizbullah chief Hassan Nasrallah uses a handkerchief as he sits between Hizbullah's spiritual leader Sheikh Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah (left) and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Sayyed (right) at the Iranian embassy in Beirut on Monday during a rally marking the seventh anniversary of Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini's death. Nasrallah told Prime Minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu that his fighters would retaliate in kind for any Israeli attacks. (Reuters)

Iranian official warns US against attack

IRAN'S military is strong enough to stand up to anyone, and even the United States should think twice about a possible confrontation, a senior Iranian commander said this week.

Brig-Gen. Ahmad Dabbin, commander of the army's ground forces, told the *Kayhan Hava* weekly that last month's military maneuvers in which 200,000 troops took part were proof of Iran's might.

"We are strong enough to defend ourselves, whoever the aggressor may be," Dabbin told the English-language paper.

"The Americans should think twice before attacking us. I believe no country in the world would dare to attack us."

The US has not suggested any attack against Iran. But Israeli leaders have raised the possibility of attacking atomic facilities where Iran allegedly is engaged in building nuclear weapons.

In the wide-ranging interview, Dabbin said Iran had the technology to build missiles, but gave no details about the program.

"We have achieved the technology of missile production, and this alone is a great achievement," Dabbin was quoted as saying.

He suggested Iran was prepared to go to war over its claim on Abu

Musa and the Greater and Lesser Abmas, three Persian Gulf islands over which the United Arab Emirates also claims sovereignty.

"The islands are ours and we are entirely prepared to protect them. I vow that any threat against an inch of Iranian territory will be met by a response from our strong army," Dabbin said.

The three islands dominate the approaches of the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf, through which pass about one-fifth of the world's oil supplies.

Iran took control of the two Tunbs in early 1970s after the British withdrew from the region. It shared sovereignty of Abu Musa with the UAE until 1994, when it seized full control.

Several rounds of talks with the UAE have failed to produce an agreement on the dispute.

Iran's new parliament this week elected a powerful hard-liner as its interim speaker but the vote suggested that neither of Iran's feuding radical and moderate factions have an overwhelming majority in the legislature.

Official Tehran radio said Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, who headed the last parliament throughout its four-year term, was temporarily reelected with 132 votes.

It said Abdullah Nouri, a former

interior minister picked by rival reformist technocrats as their choice for speaker, received 105 votes.

The radio said there were four abstentions.

A final vote to elect a speaker for a one-year term will take place in about two weeks.

Nateq-Nouri's victory indicated a hard-line majority at present. However, some 29 seats remain to be filled in the 270-seat Majlis, or parliament, in run-up elections later this year.

A rival hard-line and moderate faction have been locked in a power struggle that has become more tense since the Majlis elections in March and April, in which both factions claimed to have won a majority.

The reformist moderates, led by President Hashemi Rafsanjani, want to ease strict Islamic social strictures and pursue a pragmatic foreign policy, which includes seeking foreign investment.

The hard-liners, who have dominated parliament for the past decade, that would open the door to Western influence and promote vice.

The new parliament was inaugurated Saturday in a ceremony attended by the country's top officials. (News agencies)

Gulf Arabs sound alarm bells on Iranian weapons

GULF Arab states sounded alarm bells over Iran's efforts to develop weapons which the United States says far exceed its defense needs and accused Tehran of interfering in the affairs of Bahrain.

The Islamic republic's arms program was a threat to the region, the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said in a statement this week.

The remarks, at the end of a foreign ministers' meeting in the Saudi capital Riyadh, changed the GCC's often cautious tone towards its much larger non-Arab neighbor across the Gulf.

"It is a clear change from the previous statements like 'We all have to live together ... respect good neighborliness,'" said a Western expert who closely follows Iran's rearmament plans.

"The [GCC] is very concerned. If Iran acquires a [North Korean] No-Dong missile delivery system it will cover their entire states. If fired from the Iran-Iraq border, Iran can hit Israel," he said.

The change of tone appeared closer to that of the Gulf Arabs' main ally, the US, which accuses Iran of seeking to acquire

weapons of mass destruction and of sponsoring terrorism abroad.

Washington also claims Tehran poses a threat to world shipping by deploying missiles in and around the Gulf.

Experts say the US has recently shared with GCC countries - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates - intelligence on Iran's military plans.

Iran often says its defense spending is less than that of Saudi Arabia, the largest customer in the region for US arms and an emerging military power.

It says Western powers present Tehran as a potential threat in order to sell even more weapons to oil-rich Gulf Arab states.

The GCC statement expressed concern over Iran's "continued keen efforts to acquire and build an armament capability which far exceeds its conventional and legitimate defense needs."

"This poses a dangerous threat to the security and stability" in the Gulf, said the statement, which also called on world states and international bodies to work to make the region free of weapons of mass destruction.

The GCC also demanded "that Iran does not interfere in the

internal affairs of Bahrain and [other] member states.

"[It must not] revert to acts of sabotage and encouraging them, and must respect the independence and sovereignty of GCC states."

Asked about the change in tone, Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Youssef bin Alawi bin Abdulla told reporters:

"Bahrain has indications of interference by known and confirmed elements in Iran. We [GCC] consider any interference or danger facing a member state as a matter touching us all."

At least 25 people have died

since December 1994 in protests mainly among Bahrain's majority Moslem Shi'ite community against the island state's Sunni-dominated government.

Predominantly Shi'ite Iran denies any role in the unrest and says it is of Bahrain's own making.

There was no immediate response by Iran to the new GCC tone.

The GCC generally supported Iraq in its 1980-88 war against Iran but Gulf Arab ties with Tehran improved when the GCC failed to support Baghdad in the 1991 Gulf war over Kuwait. (Reuters)

Sudan arrests 19 for plotting against the state

SUDAN has arrested 19 people for conspiring against the government, a charge punishable by death.

The men, aged between 20 and 40, were believed to be working with opposition groups, and at least two of them were trying to recruit members, the *National Salvation* newspaper reported.

The men will face charges of "leading a war against the state and undermining the constitutional regime," Adel Abdel-Wahab, a government lawyer, told the newspaper.

The newspaper did not say when they were arrested.

Lt-Gen. Omar Hassan el-Bashir brought an Islamic fundamentalist government to power when he overthrew Sudan's democratically elected government in 1989.

Bashir has called for an end to the civil war which he blamed for

the country's poverty.

"War has never been and will never be a solution to the problem," the president said in a speech to Sudan's parliament. "This war has caused Sudan, and the south in particular, untold human and material losses."

More than a million people have died and hundreds of thousands have fled their homes in the 13-year-civil war and in famines aggravated by the fighting.

The government has touted recent agreements with smaller rebel factions, but there is still no end in sight to a conflict that has desolated parts of southern Sudan.

The government says the fighting costs \$1 million a day, funds the cash-strapped state can hardly afford. "Peace represents the biggest guarantee for development and stability in the coun-

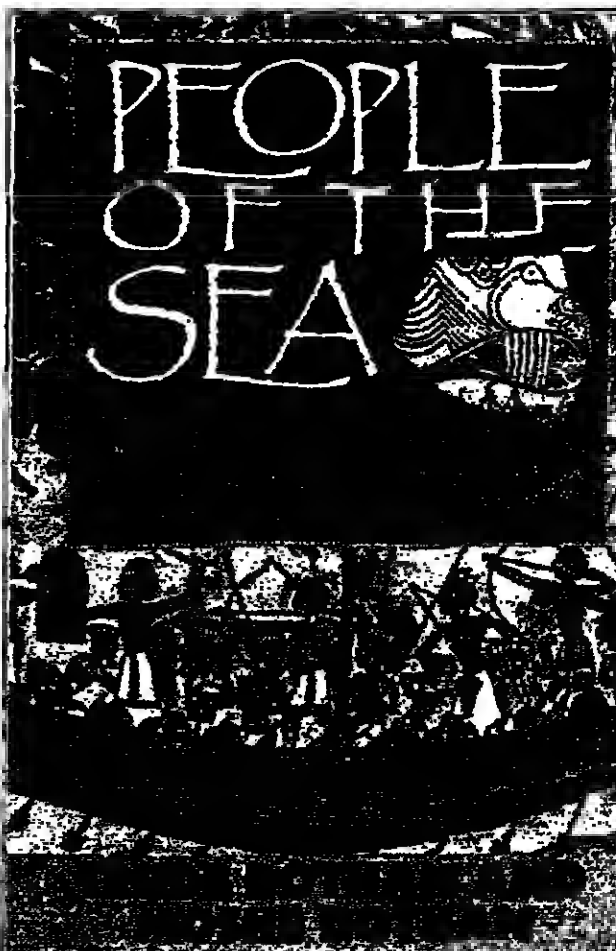
try," Bashir said.

Southern rebels - most of them Christians and adherents of tribal religions - are seeking autonomy from the Arab-dominated north led by Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist government.

The government is now under UN diplomatic sanctions for its failure to turn over three suspects in the assassination attempt on Egypt's president in Ethiopia in June, and its relations with nearly all its neighbors have plummeted in recent years.

Western aid has all but disappeared, and efforts at privatizing the economy have so far yielded few tangible benefits.

Inflation is officially put at 85 percent, but is believed to be much higher. Bashir predicted that an end to the fighting would allow the utilization of oil reserves in southern and western Sudan. (AP)



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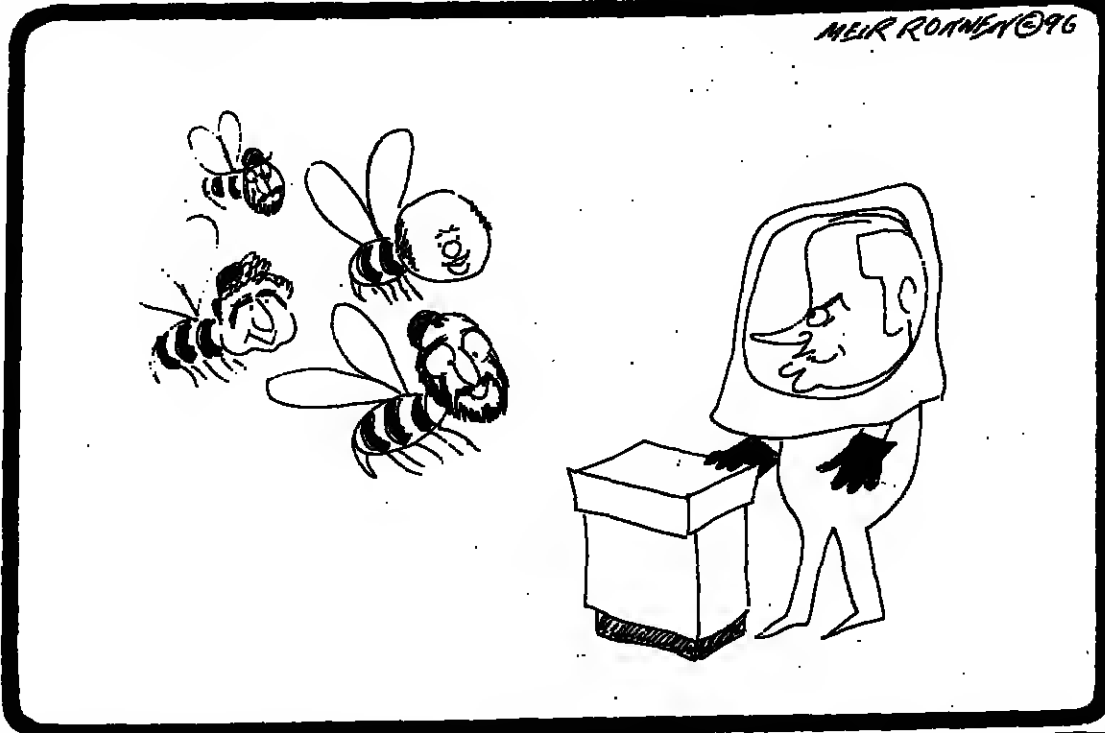
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Arab threats

THE world has taken Binyamin Netanyahu's victory in stride. Although before the elections most governments openly expressed a preference for Prime Minister Shi-

mon Peres, they would countenance similar threats by Israeli officials, let alone warnings against appointing the "wrong" ministers to their cabinets. In their pursuit of the floating vote during the



The debacle

HELEN MOTRO

PERES has what they used to call "Jewish eyes." Their inner sadness gives them away.

Even when he smiles his gaze never quite shakes off the hint of tragedy. And as the ancient Greeks observed, character is destiny.

That premonition of loss leaps out ironically at me from Peres's eyes in a campaign photograph as I leaf through the heap of campaign stickers I collected at highway intersections but never pasted onto my car.

Oscar Wilde lamented that "Each man kills the thing he loves." Now I and 49.5% of the nation bear that indictment firsthand in our own hearts.

At age 11 I became best camp friends with a new girl named Lori. We formed as strong a tie as children quickly can. Then one day I heard Lori talk offhandedly about her family as Republicans. Republicans? I had never even met one. I wouldn't have been surprised to hear that they had horns.

In my parents' circle voting Democrat was the sine qua non of democracy. And I, of course, was convinced the same was true for all nice people.

It appears that I still live in the cocoon of my own conviction. Hardly knowing even one acquaintance who supported Netanyahu, I thought it inconceivable that he should win.

Only when I drove through the countryside two days before the elections and passed the hills plastered with giant banners predicting, in crimson paint, "Upset '96" did the unthinkable take shape and form.

And on election day, while Labor officials went docilely to observe formalities at polling booths, Netanyahu's people drove indefatigably through the streets of Jerusalem, back and forth for hours on end, their loudspeakers turned up full volume, urging every last eligible body to get out and cast a ballot.

Yes, we loved Peres, but not enough. And so we lost.

Netanyahu's camp used all the legitimate tricks in the book they did their homework - and it worked.

I CAN perhaps be excused for my lack of political acumen. It is hard to be as charitable with Peres's professional advisers.

Since 1950, when Kennedy ran the first "image" campaign, the world has learned what wins elections. Theodore White spelled it out decades ago in *The Making of a President*. Good ideas, good character, good intentions, good programs - these alone are not enough. For a quarter of a century we've heard Marshall McLuhan's truism that the medium is the message, so obvious by now it's trite.

But apparently in the paleolithic Israeli Labor Party they still imagine you can turn a dusty book with a gray cover into a bestseller overnight. The debacle of the televised debate exemplified this delusion; in retrospect, it gave a hint of what was to follow.

Peres wore make-up reminiscent of the victim of a small-town evangelical embalmer, whereas Bibi conveyed the vigor of Kevin Costner, Orson Welles, and Paul Newman all rolled into one. Even for a Peres supporter Bibi's onstage magnetism was hard to resist.

Thousands in the Peres camp feel that they let their hindbrain slip through their fingers, like a defenseless goldfish in the razored teeth of the waiting baracudas.

In this *annus horribilis* we lost Rabin. We gaped at his murder, stunned, and felt guilty that we hadn't seen that character assassination lead to physical annihilation. Last week we "lost" Peres, and again we didn't see it coming. Now we are in danger of losing the peace.

"Don't worry, it'll work out," is the refrain of every Israeli from the handyman all the way up. At least when we hear it from a garage mechanic we raise an occasional eyebrow and take his assurances with a grain of salt.

"Check it anyhow," we dare to tell him, "just to make sure it works." But in this most crucial fulcrum we ourselves brushed away any small inner voice of misgiving that ventured to raise a doubt. Our own complacency hurried us against the dead end of defeat.

Yes, we loved Peres, but not enough. And so things didn't work out. And, fittingly, our character too has become our destiny.

The writer is a lawyer who lives in Kfar Shmaryahu.

That 55 percent of Jews

A.M. ROSENTHAL

But it is hypocritical - worse, famous - not to acknowledge that the election was about the fate of a Jewish state. To work, those decisions must be by a Jewish majority.

MORE THAN 55 percent of Jews voted for Netanyahu. They did so despite Peres's whopping advantages - a healthy economy and tireless choreographed support

They voted for the hope that Netanyahu might create a peace they could trust

from President Clinton.

And they did it despite the unrelenting pressure of ugly attack from abroad. No other majority is demonized as eager for bombs from neighbors to fall on its land, eager to keep its children in life-long danger.

Their offense was to criticize Peres's peace plan, worked out in stealth. It included giving up most of the West Bank, plus the Golan Heights, the inevitability of a Palestinian state, and ambiguity about Jerusalem. And worst of all, subcontracting Israeli protection against terrorism to Yasser Arafat. Labor, led by Yitzhak Rabin, and Peres, had said it would not do such things. That was before the 1992 election. So, plainly, the majority wondered which promises Peres would break this time if elected. Is that hard to understand?

The majority was not voting against peace - the very idea is

idiot - but for the hope that Netanyahu and a Likud-led coalition might create a peace they could trust while they slept, not just while they stood at arms.

Netanyahu would continue peace talks. He will not demand the return of the West Bank territory already given to the Palestinians. But he will ask for adjustments that would give Israel more military security. The Golan Heights, no. And he will insist that Israel, not Yasser Arafat, is responsible for the protection of Israelis against terrorism, from wherever it comes.

Netanyahu's job will not be merely to stand firm. He will have to do something new for him - seize opportunities to move toward peace, even if some of his coalition object.

All the while, political attacks will resume against Israel from governments that patted it on the head for doing what they and Shimon Peres wanted. Some Arab leaders may be so cozy to important Jewish visitors from America.

But others will remember that the only land-for-peace deal, with Egypt, was made not by Labor, but by the Likud's Menachem Begin. And given the Palestinian itch to run Jordan, maybe King Hussein will find limitation of their armed power bearable.

Those American Jews who will give Israelis anything but forgiveness for a Labor defeat will try to destroy a Netanyahu government. They will resume the warmonger chant against the Israeli Jewish majority and maverick foreign journalists who try to explain it, like me. Bearable.

(Courtesy of the New York Times)

Private grief, public stance

DAVID GRANIEWITZ

COMPARE this to Leah Rabin's behavior following the shocking death of her husband. She might have been forgiven for her alleged refusal to shake Binyamin Netanyahu's hand at the funeral. The right wing was responsible for creating the atmosphere in which the assassination took place. But what about her spurning the

What a pity Leah Rabin didn't take a leaf out of the Wachsmans' book

murderer's mother, who appeared, initially at least, as devastated as any of us by her son's actions?

A couple of months later, Rabin publicly announced that she was withdrawing her subscription to *Ha'arets* because veteran columnist Yoel Marcus had dared to criticize her conduct on another matter. Rabin seemed determined to prove that everyone owed her something.

Then there were her comments during the elections. She said that Yigal Amir - whom she called "sub-human" - shouldn't have been allowed to vote. Fair enough, perhaps, but Rabin didn't mention the suffrage rights of other murderers, rapists and child molesters currently serving time. Should they too have been disenfranchised?

During the vote-counting, when it seemed that Peres would win by a small margin, Rabin commented to an interviewer that she couldn't understand "this people." It seemed the margin was too narrow. The electorate should really have stamped on Netanyahu & Co.

As the outcome became apparent, Rabin became infuriated with the nation and made her now-notorious comment about feeling like leaving the country (which she later claimed had been quoted out of context).

POSTSCRIPT

MUGGERS ATTENDING their first conference in Bangladesh have decided to double their efforts at busy traffic intersections in the capital Dhaka.

Over 100 "delegates" bestowed the title "Master Hijacker" on the group's leader, Mohammed Rippon, for his record of 21 muggings in just two hours.

The muggers decided they should double their daily operations to 120 to meet "social and family demands."

tries to fulfill his campaign promises on Jerusalem and the settlements.

Netanyahu can commit no graver error than to renew the negotiations with the PLO under such threats. Neither the Arab regimes nor the

out a counterproductive move which will only harden Palestinian positions. Netanyahu's conditions for the resumption of the talks are eminently reasonable. If he fails to stick to them he will be starting his tenure with a serious misstep.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Sir, - I appreciate the thoughtful and sensitive letter of Jonathan Kuttab (April 26) and there is much with which I agree with him. However, it seems to me that Mr. Kuttab did not read my article of April 9 very well. He says: "It is a bold omission that the practices of the torture are specifically intended to punish Palestinian society as a whole. It does not attempt to disguise these activities as being 'preventive' or necessary for security or in any way intended to keep out terrorists bent on further bombings to protect the Israeli population." I specifically said that "while the closure is motivated by security reasons, to the extent that it inevitably hurts the entire Palestinian population, it is a collective punishment," and I particularly labeled the closure as a defensive and preventive measure. The motivation and purpose is not "a tribal lust for revenge" or "starving the entire Palestinian population" or "denying medical care to babies and the elderly," as is evidenced by our having adjusted the closure to allow for the passage of food and urgent cases of medical care. Collective punishment can also be applied with discretion and compassion, and the analogy to Nazi

Germany is completely out of place. Despite what Mr. Kuttab says, modern civilized society has and does accept collective punishment in appropriate situations, not as an objective but as an inevitable consequence. In the case of apartheid in South Africa, all liberal-minded persons, and I am sure Mr. Kuttab amongst them, accepted economic and sports sanctions against that country. The motivation was to pressure that country to amend the iniquitous apartheid regulations and practices and to show the country as a whole that not to do so will bring them consequences which are detrimental to their welfare. As an inevitable consequence, many South Africans lost their jobs, and in effect more blacks than whites.

But the fallacy of Mr. Kuttab's argument is given in his own words. He says that "Humanity and decency must insist on... individual responsibility for individual actions." I agree with him entirely. This is precisely the point. If the action of the suicide bomber was an individual act then I would say unequivocally that we must go after him only and punish him only. But it is clear that the action of the suicide bomber is not an individual act but part of a

collective program, and the whole Hamas community and organization openly accept that the murderous results of the lone bomber is their own. Criminal law accepts that it is not only the person who pulls the trigger or explodes the bomb who is guilty, but also those who aid and abet him, and recognizes accessories before and after the fact as sharing the guilt and the consequent punishment of the direct immediate perpetrator. Furthermore, the system of law of Western society recognizes the legal and moral principle of estoppel: that if one stands by and allows a crime or delict to be committed without taking steps to prevent it where he could, then he is precluded from claiming for the consequential harm. On this principle, if the Palestinian Authority does not take all steps of preventing the suicide bombers and their mentors from causing harm to the inhabitants of Israel, then they can hardly complain if the defensive and preventive measures which we take have the consequence of detrimental effects to the entire populace under their jurisdiction.

SOLELY HARRIS

Herziya.

POSTNATAL DEPRESSION

Sir, - In your health column of May 19, Judy Siegel reports from *The Lancet* that the use of estrogen patches is effective for the treatment of postnatal depression (PND), particularly because most prescribed drugs for this condition are not suitable when breastfeeding.

Estrogen is a hormone which is certainly contra-indicated during breastfeeding and for this reason, nursing mothers are not recommended to use estrogen-based contraceptive pills. The infant fed with milk containing estrogen may be at risk of hormone-linked diseases and imbalance into adolescence and in later life. Even the amount of estrogens found in manufactured soya

milk, which bottle-fed babies are often offered because it is less allergenic than cows milk, has led experts to think again before recommending this form of artificial milk.

On the other hand, there has been some success with the use of progesterone to prevent and treat PND. Dr. Katharine Dalton, a London-based specialist on this subject, has pioneered a treatment using controlled doses of progesterone, from the actual day of the birth continuing for several weeks, for women who are at risk for PND. Others, whose onset of depression was not predicted, have been prescribed progesterone for a limited period of time, with successful results. Nevertheless, al-

though progesterone is not contra-indicated for breastfeeding mothers, some women complain that it has reduced their milk supply.

The onset of PND is usually not solely hormonal, but is caused also by other factors such as social isolation, difficulties of adjustment, family problems, etc. There is no magic cure but it is essential that any drug or treatment prescribed does not also deprive the mother and baby of the experience of breastfeeding.

WENDY BLUMFIELD,
Hon. President,
Israel Childbirth Education Center
Haifa.

Things our parents did to show they love us

We all love our children, but with the stress and hectic pace of life in the '90s, we may not always take the time to show it in the ways we want to. I polled an unrepresentative sample of today's parents to find out what their parents did that made them feel most loved. Here are their memories:

"My dad sitting me on his lap before bed and playing children's songs on the recorder. I'd turn the pages and say, 'Play that one!'"

"My father used to take me to the park after dinner to play catch. It was just me and him, away from the house and the baby."

"Whenever my father treated me with a lift to school, we'd park nearby, eat breakfast, talk, joke, and listen to music in the car before I had to leave."

"Going to see special movies with my mother, like *Funny Girl* when it first opened and you had to make reservations!"

"Whenever my mother took me

PARENTING
RUTH MASON

ing about important, grown-up things."

"Getting to climb in between my parents in their bed when I had nightmares."

"My mother gently stroking my forehead whenever I felt bad or couldn't fall asleep at bedtime."



MEIR ROMEN © 96



MEIR ROMEN © 96

"Being carried up to bed by my father when I had fallen asleep in the car late at night after a long drive."

"Going to my father's home-office at night before bed. He'd take out a box of special chocolates and put his arm around me while I chose one."

"Every time my mother baked bread, she would put aside a piece of dough, flatten it, cover it with rendered chicken fat and garlic, and fry it for me. It was my favorite food."

"The time my mother made pink cupcakes for everyone in my fifth-grade class on Valentine's Day."

"Every Sunday, my father would take me to the coffee shop

down the street, buy me a chocolate doughnut, and let me eat all of the white icing off his apple turnover."

"If I was sick, my mother would always give me a bell to ring. And she would come right away!"

"Whenever my father went away on a business trip, he would leave me a tape of himself reading my favorite bedtime stories and singing lullabies."

"One summer morning I got up at dawn with my dad to go fishing before breakfast - just the two of us."

"My mom would always cover me with a blanket when I fell asleep on the couch. I would wake for a moment, see that it was my mom, and fall back into a wonderful sleep."

"Whenever I was feeling bad, my mom would rock me in the rocking chair."

"Snuggling between my parents in bed on Sunday mornings and having my mother read me the funny section of the paper."

"Sometimes, when my mother was in a good mood before bedtime, she would make up stories with me as the heroine!"

Peace building in the classroom

Palestinians have found a new urge to learn Hebrew, Judith Sudilovsky writes

A sea of hands shoots up into the air the minute teacher Raya Abassi asks for a volunteer to read the numbers on the blackboard in Hebrew.

"Oh, oh, please darling. Me. Me," one girl in the seventh-grade class pleads with Abassi, stretching her arm as high as it will go, waving her hand wildly and practically jumping off her bench.

Abassi smiles amusedly, but calls on another student in the back of the room. The boy stands up and slowly but surely recites the numbers in Hebrew.

This is the first year that Hebrew is being taught in a primary or secondary school in the West Bank, and the response has been surprisingly positive, she said.

The feedback has been wonderful. I was so surprised by their enthusiasm," said Abassi, 26, an Israeli Arab from Haifa who was hired to teach Hebrew at the Latin Patriarchate schools in the West Bank towns of Taba and Bir Zeit.

"They always want to learn more. They see us as their enemy, and they know if they know the language of the enemy it helps them defend themselves better verbally."

There is also a great deal of interest in learning Hebrew in Jordan, she added. Abassi teaches Hebrew to fifth through ninth graders in Bir Zeit and to fifth through 11th graders in Taba. The 11th-grade students have already asked to continue the Hebrew classes next year as well.

In addition, an Israeli Arab nun from Nazareth began teaching Hebrew in the Latin Patriarchate School in Ramallah during the second semester of the school year. "Israel is next to us and we have to live with them," said 13-year-old student Laith Kaite. "We will have to speak with the Israelis when there is a problem. We will have to understand each other."

A few years ago, said Laith, even as a little boy, he saw the Israelis as the enemy and would not have felt the same way about learning Hebrew. Fourteen-year-old Ramse Nasser said learning Hebrew would help him get work in Israel in the future.

The program is the brainchild of parish priest Father Emil Salaya, who sees it as peace building through education and hopes to have it implemented in all the Latin Patriarchate schools.

"The main reason for starting this program is peace building," he said. "Learning the other side's language is a way to make yourself understood by the other side and to understand the other side. People-to-people contact is important. This is vital for peace building. Peace is not signing a piece of paper in Washington DC, it is doing things here in the field."



Students at the Latin Patriarchate school in Bir Zeit have been very enthusiastic about learning Hebrew, which is being offered for the first time in a primary or secondary school in the territories. (Brian Hendler)

He had hoped to arrange meetings with Israeli students during the second school semester but has been unable to because of the closure. Parents were opposed to teaching Hebrew when he first brought up the idea, he said. Last year he started speaking with them and convincing them that learning Hebrew was not such a bad thing.

Now, he said, many of the parents are looking over their children's shoulders as they do the homework so they can learn too, and the Bir Zeit school opened two adult education courses in Hebrew - one as part of their executive secretary course and another one, which opened May 13, was started simply because there was a demand for it.

"I've been back here for two years, and when I went to get my driver's license and other documents I had to be in contact with Israelis and I didn't understand a word," said Samar Ayed, 30, a general science teacher at the Latin Patriarchate School in Bir

Zeit, who had been living in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. She is among the 20 adults who started learning Hebrew in the newly opened class.

"My children would ask me about words in Hebrew they heard on television, and I didn't know what they meant, I felt bad. Now, with the peace, it is important to open up. Some day we will all have to talk to one another."

Maybe, during the intifada, it would have been better if they had understood Hebrew when they had to deal with the Israeli soldiers, she added.

The Palestinians are also eager to learn Hebrew so they can understand the Hebrew television news programs, added Arabic teacher Abdullah Abi Rahmeh, who also began studying Hebrew in the new class.

He said he studied some rudimentary Hebrew when he was a student at Bir Zeit University, but it wasn't enough. It is important for them to understand what the

Israeli politicians are saying to their people, he said.

Salaya would like the Hebrew program to continue next year, but it all depends on funding.

The charity organization Caritas Internationalis promised him \$7,000 to pay for expenses this year, but he hasn't received the funds yet, he said. A representative of Caritas said they are interested in supporting the program and are doing their utmost to secure the funds. However, the person responsible for this was out of the country so could not comment directly.

Abassi said she has tried to give the students a strong base in the language so that even if the program can't be continued, they will at least have a basic knowledge in terms of words and concepts they would use in day-to-day conversation.

"They work hard to learn the language, because they feel weak without it," she said. "I think this is the main place where we are giving the peace process a push."

Clinton said falling short on African challenge

As a number of African countries descend into chaos, many analysts contend that President Clinton has not fulfilled his early promise to help African nations to identify and solve problems before they erupt.

"Clinton has never quite lived up to his own challenge," says Chester Crocker, who spent eight years as the top Africa adviser to former president Ronald Reagan. Crocker, like other critics, believes the administration has erred too far on the side of caution in dealing with ethnic violence in such places as Liberia, Rwanda and Burundi.

Crocker, citing the examples of Haiti and Bosnia, says, "You don't always pay a price for doing the right thing."

Twice in recent weeks, the administration has flown Americans and other foreigners to safety from African countries in profound turmoil - first in Liberia and then in the Central African Republic.

While French troops are trying to restore order to the Central African Republic, a former French colony, the Clinton administration has shied away from a similar role in Liberia, despite the close historic US-Liberian ties.

Since early April, conditions in Liberia have become increasingly desperate, with the population terrorized by killers and looters. And the situation in Liberia may seem tame compared with Burundi, where ethnic tensions that already have killed tens of thousands of people in recent years are believed to be escalating.

US involvement in Burundi has been limited largely to issuing appeals for power-sharing arrangements among rival ethnic factions. The administration also has

promised equipment - but no troops - if the UN decides to intervene.

Janet Fleishman, of Human Rights Watch/Africa, says that at a minimum, the administration should pass for an arms embargo for Burundi and a sizable expansion of international rights monitors in the country.

Herman Cohen, the State Department's top Africa official under former president George Bush, says the administration's willingness to intervene in Africa evaporated after 18 American soldiers were killed in a fire fight in Somalia in October 1993.

Cohen says the administration now sees every humanitarian problem in Africa as a potential quagmire.

Says Randall Robinson, who espouses an activist Africa policy as head of TransAfrica, a Washington-based group: "The Clinton administration has virtually abdicated its responsibilities." He said the government's policy toward the continent has oscillated from "ineffectual to disastrous."

US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the US must choose with care where to intervene abroad. The situations in Bosnia and Haiti lent themselves more to US intervention than the conflicts in Africa, he said.

Successive administrations have decided to stay out of Liberia, he said, partly because African troops are the designated peacekeepers.

Also, if there were a genuine democratic leader - and not "four or five warlords" - the US response might be more assertive.

In the current situation, "maybe there isn't a lot that one can do," Burns said. Electoral concerns also weigh

heavily on the administration. American casualties in an overseas mission could help Republicans in November.

There are other constraints as well, including the federal budget deficit; a Congress with strong isolationist tendencies and a propensity to cut foreign assistance, an overextended UN and the perplexing problem just how to deal with conflicts that occur within - rather than among - nations.

Africa has seldom commanded priority attention from the US, and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, shortly after Clinton took office, promised an end to past indifference. Some previous administrations, he said, "have taken years to figure out where Africa is on the map."

Since then, there have been a number of high-level visits by administration officials - a notable exception is Secretary of State Warren Christopher - but no sustained commitment.

When genocide erupted in Rwanda in 1994, leaving more than half a million dead, the administration waited more than three months before mounting a brief humanitarian airlift to assist refugees. The administration, said Crocker, "was looking at their stopwatches the whole time."

But for all the administration's perceived faults, TransAfrica's Robinson sees it as a vast improvement over Republican predecessors, which lavished money on "suitably anti-communist" regimes in such countries as Somalia, Sudan, Zaire and Liberia that are all racked by violence or poverty.

Millions were squandered on these dictators, and "we didn't care what they were doing to or for their people," he says. (AP)



Count Us In - An incredible story of a grassroots crusade to free Soviet Jewry, involving large numbers of volunteers, Jews and non-Jews. Told by Wendy Eisen, herself a distinguished campaigner, it takes us behind the scenes to strategy meetings, to the streets where demonstrators in their thousands marched in support of the campaign, to the Soviet Union where visiting Canadians confronted brutal Soviet authorities, while making contact with beleaguered refuseniks. Foreword by Martin Gilbert. Hardcover, 334 pp.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

Wednesday, June 5, 1996

Petition filed against Mifal Hapayis appointment

EVERLYN GORDON

SIX local authority heads petitioned the High Court of Justice yesterday against Prime Minister Shimon Peres's last-minute appointment of MK Avraham Katz-Oz (Labor) as chairman of Mifal Hapayis. Current chairman Gidon Gadot finishes his tenure on June 7. On May 28 - some 15 hours before the start of the voting on election day - Mifal Hapayis received a letter from Peres saying that Katz-Oz had been appointed as the new chairman, for an indefinite length of time. The letter of appointment was dated May 2. Four days later - a day after the election results were published - Katz-Oz told Mifal Hapayis he had another letter of appointment, dated May 12, which appointed him for a five-year term, the petition continued. This is significant because an appointment which was not for a specified length of time could have been revoked by the new prime minister. However, an appointment for a specific period of time cannot be ended prematurely. The petition noted that Peres and Katz-Oz have long had a close personal and political relationship. In addition to being a Labor MK in the last Knesset, Katz-Oz served as a minister during a

former Peres government and supported him in his race against former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin. The petition charged that Peres's motive in appointing Katz-Oz was strictly political, and therefore inappropriate. Furthermore, the petition noted, in a legal opinion circulated to the cabinet on May 9, Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair called on all ministers to refrain from last-minute appointments. According to previous High Court rulings, a legal opinion by the attorney general is binding on the government. The petition therefore demanded that the court invalidate both letters of appointment. Alternatively, it asked the court to at least invalidate the second letter, which would leave prime minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu the option of canceling the appointment himself. The six petitioners were Motti Kirmeir, head of the Binyamina local council; Ya'acov Edri, head of the Or Akiva local council; Eli Azoulay, head of the Alona regional council; Ami Argov, head of the Givat Ada local council; Dimona Mayor Gali Laloush; and Eliezer Biensfeld, head of the Hevel Yavneh regional council.

Wertheimer, Jordan to build industrial park

Industrialist won't comment on IDB purchases

GALIT LIPKIS BECK



Wertheimer: Plans to establish Israeli-Turkish industrial park in Izmir already underway. (Debbie Taylor-Zimelman)

INDUSTRIALIST and entrepreneur Stef Wertheimer yesterday announced plans to establish a joint Israeli-Jordanian industrial park on both sides of the Jordan River. Speaking at Tel Aviv University's Management Faculty, where he won the Outstanding Entrepreneur Award for 1996, Wertheimer said he intends to execute his plans to establish industrial parks jointly with neighboring countries. Wertheimer said he is conducting negotiations to establish an industrial park on the Jordanian bank of the river's northern part, modeled on the one he built in Tefen, as well as a similar park on the Israeli side. A coffee shop would be operated jointly in between the two parks, on the river itself. Plans to establish a joint Israeli-Turkish industrial park in Izmir are already underway, said Wertheimer, and work is expected to start there "in the very near future." Wertheimer refused to comment on his recent purchase of shares in IDB Holdings, which is controlled by the Recanat family. Earlier this week, Wertheimer purchased a new batch of IDB Holdings' shares. Stock market analysts believe Wertheimer bought an additional six percent of IDB shares for about NIS 175 million, increasing his shares in the holding compa-

a 25% stake in Iscar - to sell his shares in the company. In recent weeks, Wertheimer, through Iscar, has invested about NIS 400m. in the purchase of IDB shares. Analysts said his purchase may be connected with the IDB announcement to hold a general shareholders meeting in three weeks, which is intended to increase IDB's registered share capital. IDB Holding acting chairman Leon Recanat and general manager Eli Cohen were not available for comment. Despite the ceremonial setting, Wertheimer chose to attack several pillars of the economic establishment, most notably Israel Lands Authority director general Uzi Wechsler. Wertheimer blamed him for the real estate market's shortage of land and charged that outgoing Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer has harmed the development of industry and export. Wertheimer, who reiterated his support for a capital-gains tax, also criticized the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, which he called a casino. According to Wertheimer, who called on the government to appoint a minister for exports, the Manufacturers Association does not fulfill its purpose of adequately representing industrialists.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Bezeq sets up telecom advisers club: A telecommunications advisers club has been set up at Bezeq's initiative, bringing together experts in the private and public sector. Bezeq said telecommunications advisers have an important impact on their clients' decisions, especially the way suitable equipment is chosen. A club will help the company promote sales, Bezeq said. Members will receive updated information on Bezeq services and equipment, have access to computerized data bases, take part in professional tours of company facilities and participate in conferences. *Judy Stegel*

'May's CPI will rise 1.1%': Bank Hapoalim predicted the Consumer Price Index in May will rise 1.1 percent, lower than the 1.7% index in April but still higher than forecasts at the beginning of the year. The bank's economists said April's high inflation rates, taken into account fruit, vegetable and clothing prices which increased at a higher than average rate because of seasonal factors. The shekel continued to devalue in May, down 3.4% against the dollar and 3.2% against the basket of currencies. The economists emphasized that the last time the shekel suffered such a high devaluation in one month against the dollar was in the winter of 1992. *Galit Lipkis Beck*

Mail Boxes ready to open TA office: Mail Boxes (MBE), one of the largest retail distribution systems chains in the business services sector, is in the process of opening a representation office in Tel Aviv. MBE Israel, which is owned by the Elhadefo-family and Bareket family, received the franchise several days ago. The developers plan to open 70 branches over the next few years.

The San Diego based chain provides business and communications services to consumers and business of all sizes, including mail boxes, fax numbers, and e-mail addresses. The chain, which operates about 3,500 branches in 52 countries worldwide. The chain's annual sales turnover reaches about \$1.4 billion. *Galit Lipkis Beck*

Telrad, a company engaged in telecommunications, will market the US-based Microm company here following Northern Telecom's purchase of the company for \$150m. Microm is engaged in data communications. At the start of 1995, Northern Telecom and Telrad signed a cooperation agreement to develop and produce communication systems. *Galit Lipkis Beck*

Study: Subsidies don't aid home purchasers

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

IMMIGRANTS and young couples would be better off if all housing subsidy programs were canceled immediately, according to a study released yesterday. According to Dr. Jonathan Lipow, a policy analyst at the Institute of Advanced Strategic and Political Studies who conducted the study, immigrants and young couples derive no benefits from housing subsidy programs since almost all consumers of housing services are in some way subsidized, either directly or indirectly. Lipow said high housing costs here are the result of supply constraints, and the shortage can only be alleviated by "supply side" measures like expansion of the quantity of marketable real estate, as well as improvements in transportation infrastructure. "New immigrants and young couples will be expected to pay their share of the taxes required to finance these subsidies," said Lipow. Housing subsidy programs, originally intended to aid new immigrants and young couples who served in the IDF, are actually "a burden which makes life more difficult for members of these groups," he said. In 1996, total expenditures on housing-subsidy programs are projected to total \$2.8 billion - including mortgage grants, mortgage subsidies, rental subsidies and fees paid to mortgage banks for administering these programs. Lipow said nearly four percent of the country's GDP is devoted to housing subsidies, an exceptionally high proportion considering the country's limited resources.

Head of CPAs: Privatization requires special authority

GALIT LIPKIS BECK

SUCCESSFUL privatization requires the establishment of a special authority staffed with lawyers, accountants and economists whose sole task would be to rapidly sell state assets. Institute of Certified Public Accountants president Daniel Doron said yesterday. Doron's proposal is reminiscent of Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu's declared plans to establish an authority to privatize 50 companies within four years. Speaking at the CPA's annual conference, Doron said the association must include professionals who would receive a commission for each company sold instead of professional fees on a monthly basis. He said the authority must be headed by someone who wants "to complete his job as soon as possible." Commenting on the same issue, former Government Companies Authority director general Yossi Nitzani said the completion of the privatization process will depend mainly on the Treasury and the

prime minister. Prof. Colin Mayer, from Oxford University's School of Management, said privatization involves much more than the transfer of ownership of formerly public-sector enterprises. Where there are natural monopolies, he said, it is necessary to define contracts between customer and the firm, and institutions have to be put in place to allow contracts to be credibly sustained. Mayer participated in the "Competition, Concentration and Stability: Alternative Market Structures for Israel" conference organized by the Pinhas Sapir Center for Development and the Levinson Foundation. He said privatization is a package of ownership and contractual relationships which create a need for new institutional arrangements, whereby public-sector control is replaced by regulatory control, which requires the establishment of new quasi-public institutions.



A teacher gestures defiantly at riot police protecting Mexico's pro-government television headquarters in Mexico City earlier this week as teachers besieged the offices in their campaign to raise salaries. (Reuters)

'OPEC needs to restore Iraqi quota'

BAGHDAD (Renter) Iraq's partial return to the oil market is a warning to its fellow OPEC members that the days of pilfering Baghdad's huge quota may soon be at an end, diplomats here said yesterday.

OPEC's 100th ministerial conference opens in Vienna today with the specter of Iraqi oil looming over the talks. "It would be a blunder if OPEC thinks it can accommodate Iraq's limited sales without some adjustments in production," said a Baghdad diplomat who closely follows developments in Iraq's oil industry. Iraq has the world's second largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia. Despite UN sanctions and extensive damage by allied bombing during the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq confidently speaks of a production capacity of 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd) and an export potential of at least two million.

700,000 bpd for local use and for the exports to Jordan permitted under special clearance from the UN's sanctions committee. The oil-for-food scheme puts a ceiling on the amount of money, not on the number of barrels. "If the price goes down we will have to pump more barrels," said Abdullah Tikriti, director-general at Iraq's Oil Ministry. "With the limited sales Iraq's production could reach up to 1.5 million (bpd)," said another diplomat. "OPEC should take action on quotas and [the] ceiling; otherwise a price crash bringing more Iraqi oil to market may be the likely outcome."

Iraq's oil-for-food pact with the UN allows exports worth \$2 billion over six months. Iraqi oil officials say the deal, at current prices, provides for exports of about 800,000 bpd. Iraq currently produces around

Amir Mohammed Rasheed to the OPEC meeting. Rasheed said last week Iraq would insist on its pre-Gulf War quota of 3.14 million bpd. "It is not permissible that other countries compensate for it," he said.

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'Tourism depends on security, not peace treaties'

HAIM SHAPIRO

TOURISM to Israel depends on personal security and not on peace treaties, according to Africa-Israel Tourism managing director David Fattal. Africa-Israel holds the local franchise for Holiday Inn, the international chain with the largest number of hotels here. Fattal, who was speaking at a ceremony at which Holiday Inn signed an agreement with El Al by which the airline's passengers will receive frequent flyer credit for staying at the chain's hotels, was answering questions regarding tourism following the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister. If security improves or if the current situation of quiet continues, then tourism will flourish, Fattal said. It was not important what party ruled or how they acted in the Knesset, he said. However, he added that it was important there remain a separate ministry devoted to tourism, since it was the country's leading economic branch. El Al marketing director Dov Koniak, who also spoke, noted that there has been a drastic drop in the number of Israelis going to Turkey.

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Source: Telephone quotes, May 1994

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ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Patrah (foreign currency deposit rates) (\$U.S. \$)

Currency (deposit term)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (USD 100,000)	4.25	4.25	4.50
German mark (DM 200,000)	1.75	1.75	2.125
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.50	0.50	0.75

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (4.8.96)

CURRENCY BASKET	CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Market
	Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	3.844	3.705	3.844	3.705	3.844
German mark	2.2942	2.2188	2.29	2.27	2.294
French franc	2.1355	2.1701	2.09	2.07	2.1355
Japanese yen (100)	5.0947	5.1494	4.87	4.82	5.0947
British pound	0.8305	0.8407	0.81	0.80	0.8305
Swedish krona	3.0252	3.0517	2.95	2.92	3.0252
Dutch guilder	1.8070	1.8278	1.87	1.87	1.8070
Swiss franc	2.8252	2.8448	2.75	2.76	2.8252
Spanish peseta	0.4887	0.4928	0.48	0.48	0.4887
Norwegian krona	0.4888	0.5070	0.48	0.52	0.4888
Denish krone	0.6331	0.6321	0.64	0.67	0.6331
Finland mark	0.8987	0.7180	0.88	0.82	0.8987
Canadian dollar	2.2646	2.4220	2.24	2.48	2.2646
Australian dollar	2.2855	2.5477	2.25	2.55	2.2855
S. Africa rand	0.7481	0.7332	0.67	0.67	0.7481
Belgian franc (10)	1.0389	1.0567	1.02	1.08	1.0389
Austrian schilling (10)	0.3250	0.3240	0.32	0.32	0.3250
Italian lira (100)	2.1151	2.1493	2.07	2.12	2.1151
Japanese yen (100)	1.8089	1.8089	1.80	1.80	1.8089
Swedish krona	4.0435	4.1088	4.02	4.10	4.0435
Spanish peseta (100)	5.1835	5.2872	5.09	5.25	5.1835
Swiss franc (100)	3.8221	3.8221	3.82	3.82	3.8221

* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

Indexes fall as shares sold in IDB Holding

TEL AVIV STOCK MARKET

FELICE MARANZ



STOCK indexes fell yesterday as investors sold shares in IDB Holding Corp., one of the country's largest investment companies...

Eurobourses end mixed as dollar reaches 2-year high against yen

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - The dollar leapt over 109 yen for the first time in more than two years yesterday, climbing on worries about the frailty of the Japanese banking system...

Dow up as rates ease

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks were mostly higher yesterday as interest rates eased in the bond market, but trading remained quiet in advance of Friday's key report on employment.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

Table with columns: MARK, STERLING, YEN, SFR, FFf. Rows show exchange rates for various currencies.

TEL AVIV STOCKS. Multi-sided trading and Two-sided trading tables listing various stocks, prices, and changes.

ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK logo and text.

Election keeps Russian stocks volatile

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russian share prices face further sharp swings in the next few weeks whatever the results of the presidential election, dealers said yesterday.

Czechs learn to live with political instability

PRAGUE (Reuters) - Czechs, who woke up this week in a constitutional limbo, have a skill to learn which their post-communist neighbors in Poland and Hungary have already mastered - living with political instability.

CompuServe, Microsoft in alliance

NEW YORK (Reuters) - CompuServe Inc., the No. 2 online will be the first to use Microsoft Corp.'s new "Normandy" Internet and online software technology under an alliance announced yesterday.

Packard Bell, NEC to merge PC operations

SACRAMENTO (Reuters) - Packard Bell Electronics Inc. and NEC of Japan said yesterday they were merging their personal computer operations into a new company with anticipated annual revenues of \$8 billion.

Due to technical problems, the international stocks were unavailable.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, possibly a page number or margin note.

Seles, Courier bow out of Open

PARIS (Reuters) - Monica Seles and Pete Sampras, the two Americans topping the world tennis rankings, had contrasting fortunes on an emotional day at the French Open yesterday.

Seles, women's joint world No. 1 with Steffi Graf, lost her first match at Roland Garros in seven years, bowing out in the quarter-finals to 10th seed Jana Novotna 7-6, 6-3. It was the Yugoslav-born player's worst-ever result in Paris. Sampras, in contrast, reached the semifinals for the first time in the one grand slam tournament he has never won, beating compatriot Jim Courier in a tense match 4-6, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

The intense battle, which lasted three hours and 31 minutes, was the third five-setter Sampras had played since the start of the tournament.

"It was very emotional," said Sampras as he was leaving the court before bursting into tears as he was asked about his coach Tim Gullikson, who died recently of brain cancer.

"In the fifth set, my mind was kind of a blank. I was very tired," added the American, who did not even try to return Courier's serves in the end to concentrate on his own service.

The Wimbledon champion suffered from cramp at the end of the fifth set and limped behind the baseline as Courier, winner here in 1991 and 1992, tried to hammer him out of the tournament by striking aces - 28 in all.

Sampras could not have had a worse start. He conceded the first set in a tie-break, which he lost 7-4, and dropped his serve early in the second. It was not until the third set that the match really started for him.

"I decided I would make life difficult for Jim. I was a little bit too anxious at first but he let me back into the match. My serve helped too," said Sampras, who meets Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the semifinals.

The Russian, seeded sixth, qualified for his second French Open semifinal in a row at the expense of Dutchman Richard Krajicek, a semifinalist in 1993.

Kafelnikov, who had not dropped a set in the earlier rounds, was far too fast and clever from the baseline for serve-and-volley specialist Krajicek in a 6-3, 6-4, 6-7, 6-2 victory.

Seles's return to Paris for the



OLE! - Spain's Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario throws up a triumphant fist after defeating Karina Habsudova of Slovakia yesterday. (Reuters)

first time since she was stabbed by a Steffi Graf fan in Hamburg in 1993, was also emotional. But it did not last the distance.

Her defeat by Novotna was only the second of her career at Roland Garros. The other was in 1989 when she was beaten by Graf in the semifinals of her first French Open.

Seles said she would now try to forget Paris and concentrate on next month's Wimbledon, the only grand slam tournament she has yet to win. Seles bravely saved three set

points in the first set tie-break before losing it 9-7. Novotna, a semifinalist here in 1990, took a 3-0 lead in the second set and held that advantage until the end.

But Novotna is often jittery when it comes to finishing off an opponent and this was once again the case on yesterday as Seles had three break points when the Czech was serving for the match.

But Novotna recovered to win in one hour and 28 minutes. Novotna now meets Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, who

struggled to make the semifinals for the sixth consecutive time.

The 24-year-old Catalan, winner here in 1989 and 1994, had to fight for the three hours of another nervous contest to dismiss unseeded Slovak Karina Habsudova 6-2, 6-7, 10-8.

The German top seed had a much easier quarter-final yesterday, crushing fifth seed Iva Majoli of Croatia 6-3, 6-1. In the semifinal, she will meet Spain's Conchita Martinez, who beat American Lindsay Davenport 6-1, 6-3.

Palmer powers Rangers past Brewers

MILWAUKEE (AP) - Dean Palmer's 437-foot homer helped power Bobby Witt's first victory in five starts Monday night leading Texas to a 9-6 victory.

Rangers All-Star catcher Ivan Rodriguez left the game in the first inning after getting hit on his right wrist by a wild pitch and was replaced by Dave Valle. X-rays were negative and he's listed day-to-day.

Witt (5-4) gave up two earned runs and five hits with four walks and seven strikeouts in six innings for his first win since April 8 against Toronto.

The Brewers rallied for four runs in the ninth against Texas' bullpen before Mike Henneman finally closed it out for his 16th save.

Twins 9, Angels 3
Chuck Knoblauch continued his torrid hitting with three hits and three RBIs and Roberto Kelly added two key doubles for host Minnesota. Knoblauch, batting .514 in his last 10 games, drove in two runs in the Twins' three-run second inning and another in a four-run eighth as the Twins won their third straight and their fifth in the last six games.

Kelly had a two-out double and scored the tiebreaking run in the seventh, and his double in the eighth drove in the final two runs. Mike Trombley (1-0), recalled from Triple-A on Sunday, pitched two-plus innings in relief of starter Rich Robertson, allowing three hits.

Angels pitcher Chuck Finley (7-3) had his worst outing since the opener, giving up seven runs and 12 hits. Athletics 2, Royals 1
John Wasdin and three relievers combined on a seven-inning and host Oakland snapped a three-game losing streak.

Wasdin (2-0), making his fourth career start, allowed one run and five hits in 6 1/2 innings. He walked Jose Offerman twice, the only walks he has given up in games he has started.

Jim Corsi relieved Wasdin with two men on in the seventh and Mike Mohler came in with runners on first and second and none out in the ninth to halt Royals' rallies.

Despite losing, Kevin Appier (4-6) lowered his ERA to 3.23, fourth best in the American League, by allowing two runs on six hits while throwing his first complete game since last Sept. 15. He struck out nine, bringing his season total to 84 - second in the AL.

John Smoltz didn't win for the first time in nearly two months, but his Atlanta teammates kept him from getting the loss at home.

Smoltz's 11-game winning streak was in jeopardy when he left the game after the sixth inning trailing 4-1. But the Braves scored three runs in the seventh, then won it in the eighth on Ryan Klesko's two-out, run-scoring triple.

The Braves have won 21 of their last 26 games.
Brad Clontz (3-2) earned the win, and Mark Wohlers pitched the ninth for his 10th save.

Bob MacDonald (0-2) lost in relief. Giants 6, Reds 3
Matt Williams ended visiting San Francisco's home-run drought with a two-run homer and added a two-run double.

The Giants scored three runs in the first inning, highlighted by Williams' 13th homer, and Williams added a two-run double in the ninth off Jeff Brantley. Williams' homer ended a streak of eight homeless games by the Giants.

William VanLandingham (4-7) allowed just six hits and two unearned runs over 6 1/2 innings for his second consecutive win. Rod Beck pitched the ninth.

The Reds have lost 13 of 17 to fall 10 games under .500 (20-30) for the first time this season.

MONDAY'S AL RESULTS:
Minnesota 9, California 3
Texas 9, Milwaukee 6
Oakland 2, Kansas City 1

MONDAY'S NL RESULTS:
Pittsburgh 7, Colorado 2
Atlanta 5, New York 4
San Francisco 6, Cincinnati 3
Chicago 4, Philadelphia 3
St. Louis 3, San Diego 0

Wesley (0-7) remained winless in 12 starts and plagued by rain. His last three starts have been delayed by showers.

Pirates 7, Rockies 2
Matt Rubeal pitched seven solid innings to get his first major league win as host Pittsburgh rained starter Brett Swift's first appearance of the season.

In only his third start, Rubeal (1-0) allowed two runs and five hits. He struck out four and allowed one single over his last five innings.

Jeff King's two-run homer in the fifth inning off reliever Mike Farmer (0-1) broke a 2-2 tie. Carlos Garcia, who had three hits Sunday, went 4-for-5 in his career high for him in a game for the Pirates.

Cubs 4, Phillies 3
Jose Hernandez, a defensive replacement in the seventh inning, led off the bottom of the ninth with his first homer of the season lifting Chicago to a home win.

Hernandez lined a 2-2 pitch from Ken Ryan (2-2) over the ivy in left center, giving the Cubs a victory in their final at-bat for the 10th time this season.

Bob Patterson (2-2), who worked 1 1/2 innings of scoreless relief, got the victory.
Chicago starter Steve Trachsel hit his first major league homer - his first hit of the season in 19 at-bats - to give the Cubs a 3-1 lead in the fifth.

But in the seventh he surrendered a pair of homers to Mike Benjamins, his second, and Ricky Ecker, his first in the majors.

Cardinals 3, Padres 0
Rookie Alan Benes started for his worst outing of the season by pitching a six-hitter for his first shutout and visiting St. Louis won its fifth straight.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

Belle; Favarez suspended for brawl
Cleveland teammates Albert Belle and Julian Favarez, and Milwaukee's Mike Matheny each got five-game suspensions from the American League for their parts in a bench-clearing brawl on Friday night, it was announced yesterday.

The players' union appealed all three penalties, meaning the suspensions can't start until after a hearing.

'Camby accepted perks from agents'
Marcus Camby, the national player of the year, accepted money and gifts, including expensive jewelry, from agents while playing for the University of Massachusetts, it was reported yesterday.

Accepting such inducements from prospective agents is against NCAA rules and could result in penalties against Massachusetts, which reached the Final Four this season for the first time.

Playoffs - at a glance

NBA FINALS
TONIGHT (Game One): Seattle at Chicago
ON FRIDAY: Seattle at Chicago

STANLEY CUP FINALS
EAST NIGHT (Game One): Florida at Colorado
TOMORROW NIGHT: Florida at Colorado

Platt: England's morale boosted by last week's events

MARLOW (Reuters) Morale and unity in the England camp ahead of Euro 96 have been boosted by the fall-out from the players' behavior on last month's tour of China and Hong Kong, captain David Platt said yesterday.

Manager Terry Venables said on Monday the team had accepted collective responsibility for the damage to two television sets and a table on the Cathay Pacific flight home from the tour. He said unspecified fines would be imposed on all the players.

Platt and Venables both said the events of the last week had brought the squad together.

"I don't think there was any easy way out but we believe that (collective responsibility) was the right way out for the squad," Platt said. "This shows that we are together and that's the important thing for the next 30 days."

"It's made them more determined," said Venables at the team's training ground west of London yesterday.

England opens the European championship with a match at Wembley against Switzerland on Saturday. "Nothing less than winning the tournament would be acceptable," Platt said.

Striker Les Ferdinand and defender Tony Adams sat out yesterday's training session but both insisted they were merely resting as a precaution. Ferdinand has had a groin strain and Adams a calf problem.



WINNING STYLE - Members of the Israeli Olympic delegation show off outfits they will be wearing to the opening ceremonies of the games in Atlanta. The clothing was specially designed by Castro.

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Tel Aviv and Haifa - weekdays: 12 noon, 2 days before publication; for Friday and Sunday: 4 p.m. Thursday in Tel Aviv and 12 noon Thursday in Haifa.

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State: Counting blank ballots would change rules of game

THE High Court of Justice should reject three petitions demanding a second round in the prime ministerial elections, because this would be changing the rules of the game after the fact, the state told the court yesterday.

The petitions, which will be heard this morning by a panel of five justices, argued that blank ballots should have been counted. If they had been, neither Binyamin Netanyahu nor Shimon Peres would have received 50 percent of the valid ballots, and a second round of balloting would be required.

"If the petitions are accepted at the present time, this would constitute a retroactive change in the rules of the elections as they were known to the general public, which acted accordingly," wrote government attorney Uzi Fogelman in his response to the petitions. "This would constitute a clear and significant injury to the public's legitimate expectations, according to which people calculated how they would vote. Such a result is inconceivable, especially in light of the behavior of the petitioners, who participated in the process without raising their

EVELYN GORDON

objections at the time, but only after the results of the elections were known."

Fogelman noted that the Central Elections Committee decided to disqualify blank ballots in February, and this decision was announced to the public via television and newspaper ads. There is therefore no excuse for the petitioners not to have submitted their petition before the elections, he said.

However, Fogelman said, the state would have opposed the petitions even if they had been submitted in time, because the petitioners' position contradicts the law.

According to the election law, a voter can cast a blank ballot "on which is written the name of the candidate, and that is all." There is nothing in this paragraph which permits the casting of a blank ballot with nothing on it, Fogelman noted. The blank ballots are available only in the event that the printed ballots for one of the candidates have run out.

The law also gives the CEC the

right to disqualify ballots for other reasons, by the decision of a two-thirds majority. The petitions had charged that the CEC's vote to disqualify blank ballots did not have the necessary majority, but in fact, this decision passed unanimously, Fogelman said.

Fogelman also said the wording of the direct elections law - which states that the prime minister must be elected in the first round by "at least half the valid ballots," but in the second round only by getting more votes than the other candidate - is only because in the first round, there could be more than two candidates, while this is never the case in a run-off.

Finally, he said, the petitioners are incorrect in stating that there is a long tradition of acknowledging the voter's right to express opposition by casting a blank ballot. Blank ballots have never been counted in the Knesset elections, he noted.

Netanyahu also submitted a response to the petitions. It stressed the unfairness of changing the election rules after the fact. This would be like changing the rules of a marathon after the race is over, he said.

Turkey defends IDF accord during Vilnai's visit

News agencies

ANKARA - As Deputy Chief of Staff Matan Vilnai's met with Turkish top brass here yesterday, Turkey rejected criticism by Iran and some Arab nations of its recent military cooperation agreement with Israel.

Vilnai met with Gen. Ismail Hakkı Karadayı, head of Turkey's chiefs of staff, and other high-level

officers. The agreement signed February 23 allows Israeli pilots to train in Turkish airspace and Israeli warships to enter Turkish harbors.

"None of these accords include hostility or cooperation against any third country," Maj. Gen. Erol Ozkasmak, secretary-general of

Turkey's chiefs of staff, said in a statement. "They are not defense cooperation agreements but agreements that foresee military training cooperation."

Turkish analysts have said the agreement has put pressure on Syria, which is at odds with both Turkey and Israel.

Under the agreement, Israel is also to upgrade some 50 Turkish F-4 fighters. Some reports, which have not been confirmed by Turkish defense sources, said Israel has been planning to sell automatic weapons to Turkey.

The chief of the Turkish navy was in Israel for talks two weeks ago.

The military agreement between the two countries and increased contacts have been viewed as a new alliance being formed in the region. Egypt, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, and Iran have denounced Turkey for the accord. The treaty also angered many Muslims in Turkey.

An Islamic party which has become the top vote-getter in recent elections, has also denounced the agreement and said it would be scrapped if it came to power.

Vilnai is scheduled to visit the Armored Vehicles Training Center, near Ankara, and the Army War College today. He leaves Turkey on Sunday.



Canadian Ambassador David Berger (left) and Montreal Mayor Pierre Bourque (center) visit developer David Azrieli at the site of his Hashalom office complex in Tel Aviv yesterday. (Ailon Ron/Israel Sun)

Canadian business delegation visits

YOCHI DREAZEN

A DELEGATION of Canadian business executives visited developer David Azrieli's Project Hashalom office complex in Tel Aviv yesterday.

The visit was part of a four-day trip, which Montreal Mayor Pierre Bourque led, aimed at increasing trade and cooperation. "This is a country with fabulous economic growth," said Bourque, who is the first mayor of Montreal to visit Israel. "I'm here to enhance the friendship and business relations between Montreal and Tel Aviv."

Despite recent concern over a possible fall-off in foreign investment following Binyamin Netanyahu's election, members of the delegation expressed hope that the levels of trade and investment may actually increase in the near future.

"I don't think the new government will have a negative effect on trade," said Montreal deputy mayor Saulie Zajdel. "If anything, the Likud has shown itself to be more open to private enterprise than the previous government."

Zajdel added that the trip - which will also include stops in Lebanon, Greece, and Turkey - was planned over a year ago and its occurrence so shortly after the elections is "coincidental."

Azrieli said that the change in government should not discourage foreign investors or companies.

"The economic policies of the two parties are not all that different," he said. "The people have spoken, but the ability of the

Israeli economy to grow has not changed."

He added, however, that the "economy may be in line for a slight slowdown."

Canadian Ambassador David Berger said that with the final signing of a Canada-Israel free trade agreement expected in the near future, trade between the two countries is expected to grow sharply - regardless of the government.

"When there's a change of government like this, naturally investors get a bit nervous," he said. "But we're telling them that the economy is still growing, and the fundamental reasons for that growth are as strong as ever."

The delegation will remain in Tel Aviv today, visit Jerusalem tomorrow, and then continue on to Greece.

WEATHER

Jerusalem 14-25
Tel Aviv 18-27
Beersheva 16-29
Haifa 15-26
Ashdod 17-29
Golan 12-24
Dead Sea 24-34
Eilat 23-35

Forecast: Partly cloudy to clear. Lower than usual temperatures.

AROUND THE WORLD

Location	Low	High	Cloud
Amman	12	22	clear
Bangkok	24	32	partly
Buenos Aires	13	23	clear
Calcutta	24	32	clear
Chicago	13	23	clear
Colombo	24	32	clear
Hankou	13	23	clear
Hong Kong	24	32	partly
London	13	23	clear
Los Angeles	13	23	clear
Manila	24	32	clear
Moscow	13	23	clear
New York	13	23	clear

Winning cards and numbers

IN yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the queen of spades, 10 of hearts, king of diamonds, king of clubs. In last night's weekly Lotto drawing the winning numbers were 18, 6, 30, 26, 9, 11 and the addition number was 10.

No compromise in Moscow over Jewish Agency status

MOSCOW (AP) - Russia's justice minister met late Monday with Israel's ambassador to Moscow in an effort to resolve the controversy over the Jewish Agency's status in Russia, but no compromise was reported.

Valentin Kovalyov told Ambassador Aliza Shinar that the agency's activities must strictly correspond to Russian law, the Interfax news agency said.

The Jewish Agency was told in April that its accreditation to operate in Russia was being canceled. An unnamed Justice Ministry official said problems with the agency's offices dated back to 1992. He said the Jewish Agency should have been registered with Russian federal institutions instead of the Justice Ministry and could not have subdivisions - such as the agency's network of regional branches in Russia.

The official also said the agency's international status was not clear, because it could not be recognized as a non-governmental organization. He said the agency did not fit the model of a public organization, either.

The Russian official also claimed that the agency is linked to Israeli special services, including the Mossad. The Jewish Agency could be viewed as interfering in Russia's internal affairs, and its activities could be regarded as going against Russia's national interests, the official said.

The Environment Ministry: More than picking up the garbage

COMMENT
LIAT COLLINS

OUTGOING Environment Minister Yossi Sarid yesterday sent a letter to prime minister-elect Binyamin Netanyahu pleading with him not to disband the ministry, following reports that the new government intends to merge it with a larger ministry. If this happens, Israel will be entering the run-up to the year 2000 with a move that takes it backwards.

In an ideal situation, there is no need for the Environment Ministry; each government office would be aware enough of environmental concerns to automatically consider them at the project planning stage. But we are far from this ideal.

True, some ministries have an environmental department staffed with dedicated professionals. But these employees are human and

are often faced with strong conflicts between the wishes of their superiors and environmental needs. Environment Ministry staff do not face this kind of conflict and can work with greater objectivity. As the country enters a period of intense development and changes in land use, the Environment Ministry's work should be increased, not reduced. Now is the ideal opportunity to increase its authority to include such issues as sewage (currently the responsibility of the Interior Ministry).

Without an independent Environment Ministry, hasty development will replace sustainable development, and immediate needs will take precedence over long-term environmental impact. The past decade has seen rapid population growth combined with the increased demands of industry, agriculture, urban expansion and transport. All these have placed

increasing stress on resources, and intensified the pressure to exploit them without considering the effect on the environment.

It was a mistake to wait until 1988 to create the Environment Ministry. This was compounded by waiting another five years to appoint a full-time minister who took the position seriously. The Likud must stick by the environmental promises it made in its party platform.

The Environment Ministry is not a luxury. It is a necessity. The government must realize that the ministry was not founded just to pick up litter and keep the streets clean. It must tackle very real threats of air, soil and water pollution; the dangers of hazardous materials and the problems of waste management and protecting the open landscape.

The Environment Ministry is not only responsible for ensuring the present generation can live happily and healthily in Israel. It also has a duty to future generations whose needs must be considered today.

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